WSU steering clear of new four-year fixed-tuition rate

BY LAINIE BUSCO

A new plan to provide University of Kansas freshmen with a four-year fixed-tuition rate is a big step toward helping make college in Kansas more affordable.

But don't look for the change to come to Wichita State University any time soon. "Yes, we've looked at it, but we do not think it's appropriate for the students coming to WSU," says WSU President Don Beggs. "It doesn't fit our profile."

KU's four-year tuition compact was approved last week by the Kansas Board of Regents. It allows first-time freshmen to go through all four years of college with their tuition and fees at a fixed rate, much like the interest rate on a home mortgage.

Wichita State University
Address:
1845 Fairmount St., Wichita, Kan. 67260.
Phone: (316) 978-3456.
Fall 2006 headcount: 14,298.
Full-time equivalency: 10,549.
President: Dr. Donald L. Beggs.

It's a good idea, Beggs says, but WSU has a different demographic, mostly non-traditional students who take internships or co-operative jobs during school. Because of that, a small percentage of WSU students actually finish college in only four years.

PREDICTABLE COSTS

Under KU's tuition compact, if a student who started with a fixed rate goes past the four-year mark, he or she has to pay the current — and likely higher — rates.

All but four bachelor's degrees at KU will be eligible for the compact, which goes into effect this fall. The university also is working to create a four-year schedule of required campus fees that would allow first-time freshmen to pay for things such as the student health center, fitness and recreation center and the bus system at a fixed rate.

The company includes an optional two-year fixed rate for student housing.

Returning or transfer students have to pay KU's standard tuition rate, which is set every June.

Mariega Roney, vice provost for student success at KU, says having to wait until June each year makes it difficult for families to plan their finances.

"When you decide to purchase a home ... the attraction of fixed-rate mortgages is that you can plan," Roney says. "What was happening for college students was they could afford it year one, but by year three they didn't know what the cost would be and it became unaffordable."

By making costs predictable and consistent, KU officials hope to increase enrollment and its graduation rate.

LOCAL IMPACT

Despite what may be a bigger draw to KU, Beggs says he isn't concerned that the compact will affect WSU.

"I think the student who wants the work experience will probably look a little harder at us," he says. "More and more students are looking at how their degree programs relate to job opportunities."

Jim Flax, coordinator for guidance and counseling for USD 259, says for students already planning to attend WSU, the compact is a good bonus. For those still up in the air, it could make a difference.

"Those that are trying to choose, then that might tip KU in their favor," Flax says. "But I just don't see it taking a student who hasn't been planning to go to KU anyhow."
'07 not lucky for Sunflower State

Floods join blizzards, tornado for a rough first half of year

WICHITA (AP) — The first half of 2007 has been one to forget for many Kansans as blizzards, deadly tornadoes and now flooding have caused millions of dollars in damage, disrupted lives and put a dent in the state's economy.

Of the state's 105 counties, only three — Marion, Atchison and Jefferson — have escaped being designated a disaster area by local, state or federal officials this year.

"We are beginning to wonder what has brought Kansas to the focal point" of severe storms, said Sharon Watson, director of public affairs for Kansas Emergency Management. "We have certainly gotten every type of storm you can have, with the exception of hurricane, and we hope we don't have one of those."

State officials are still tallying the damage from last week's floods, which affected 20 counties in southeast Kansas. So far, emergency management personnel have identified about 3,100 homes destroyed or heavily damaged in five counties, with a dollar figure to be determined later.

Winter storms that crippled western Kansas earlier this year and a rash of spring tornadoes, including one that largely destroyed Greensburg, have caused more than $1 billion in damage already, with the state spending at least half that for recovery efforts.

Much of the damage has occurred in rural areas, which have struggled in recent years because of drought and other economic obstacles.

Insurance companies are fielding claims for hundreds of millions of dollars, money that temporarily boosts local economies with the rebuilding of homes and the replacement of lost furniture and other property.

But that doesn't make up for the original damage.

"Any time wealth is destroyed, we're all poorer," said Art Hall, director of the University of Kansas' Center for Applied Economics.

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said Friday she may call lawmakers back to the Capitol for a special session to pass a relief package for those affected by the floods. They crafted a similar bill for Greensburg residents.

The question is whether Kansas has any money left to cover the region's needs.

The ice storms and blinding snow of December and January caused an estimated $360 million in damage to roads, power lines and telephone poles — the costliest natural disaster in state history. President Bush later designated 44 counties as part of a major disaster area.

Five months later, on May 4, a swarm of tornadoes struck the state's midsection, including a 1.7-mile-wide monster than killed 10 people in Kiowa County and destroyed or damaged almost 1,000 homes in Greensburg. Three other people died in twisters the same day or the next day.

Insurance companies said the tornado in Greensburg caused more than $150 million in insured losses. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Small Business Administration have set aside $42.5 million to help those affected by the storms.

"Those two storms (the winter storms and tornadoes) alone have left an unprecedented mark on the state in terms of damage and destruction," Watson said.

The state then got a heavy dose of rain, bringing floods to central Kansas in May and southeast Kansas in late June and early July. The high water in Coffeyville was made even worse by the release of thousands of gallons of crude oil from a refinery on the Verdigris River.

"All I can tell you is that I have my staff very busy researching the length of a cubit," said Randy Duncan, emergency management director for Sedgwick County, referring to the unit of measurement used in the Bible to build Noah's Ark.

Duncan said the disasters should remind Kansans that the state is vulnerable to bad weather year-round and they should be prepared — especially if they're in local or state government.

"You will see more local governments pay more attention to financing emergency management activities," he said.

Economists said disasters do provide the opportunity for struggling towns to get improved facilities, such as new city buildings and more technologically advanced homes. But any underlying economic weaknesses will likely remain a problem.

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

Meteorologists said there's no one cause of this year's weather mayhem, noting that the blizzards were caused by a strong jet stream while the tornadoes and flooding were driven by a weak jet stream. For the rest of the summer, forecasters predict weather to remain between the extremes.

Of course, it could be worse. The Legislature hasn't had to deal with locust swarms since 1874.
Supreme Court chief justice to visit University of Kansas

LAWRENCE (AP) — Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts plans to spend two days at the University of Kansas in 2008, meeting with law and business students and delivering a speech, the university announced Friday.

Roberts is scheduled to give the Vickers Memorial Lecture on April 30 at the Lied Center.

The university's business and law schools are working together to develop a schedule for his visit.

The university said law professor Steven McAllister was pivotal in bringing Roberts to the university, using his experience as a clerk for Supreme Court justices Byron White and Clarence Thomas to communicate with Roberts's office.

Tickets to the lecture are free but won't be available until next year.

The Vickers lecture is named after J.A. Vickers, an alumnus and founder of Vickers Petroleum, and his son, Robert. Speakers have included George H.W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, Kenneth Starr and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.
RCACF announces scholarship winners

Funds managed through the Russell County Area Community Foundation provide several scholarships. This year’s scholarship recipients, who were recognized May 18 during a luncheon at the Deines Cultural Center, were announced by Byrne Wood, RCACF executive director.

The guest speaker at the luncheon was Tasha Keathley, a member of the Russell High School Class of 1997. High school graduates who received scholarships were as follows:

Joshua Scholarships

Russell High School:
Tyler Saryerwinnie, $3,000; Jamie Crawford, $3,000; Candice Williams, $3,000; Christianna Pruden, $1,000; Mason Rohleder, $1,000; Shayla Ryan, $1,000; Alexa Heier, $1,000; and Talbot Driscoll, $500.

Lucas-Luray High School: Bessie Harp, $3,000; and Travis Stoneburgh, $500.

Ochs Scholarships

Russell High School:
Matthew Cook, $500; and Megan Cline, $500.

Boehler Scholarships

Tristan Walters, $500; Brett Pohlman, $500; and Tabitha Standley, $500.

College students who received Joshua Scholarships were as follows:

Bethany College:
Holly Finkbeiner, $1,000; and Adam Carey, $1,000.

Fort Hays State University: Amanda Shaffer, $1,000, Martin Brungardt, $1,000; Karen Seier, $500; and Anthony Driscoll, $500.

University of Kansas:
Tasha Keathley, $1,000; and Brooke Stoppel, $500.

Kansas State University:
Jessica Scarborough, $1,000; Megan Phillips, $1,000; and Blake Stoppel, $500.

Pittsburg State University: Ashley Rohleder, $1,000.
Audio-Reader Network, the radio reading service for the blind and visually impaired in Kansas and Missouri, would like the citizens of Leavenworth to know how grateful we are to the *Leavenworth Times* for donating a newspaper subscription to be read on air to people who are no longer able to read for themselves.

Every afternoon, Monday through Friday from 2 to 4 p.m., Audio-Reader broadcasts a program of regional newspapers of Eastern Kansas. We read from *The Atchison Globe*, the *Leavenworth Times*, *The Ottawa Herald* and a wide variety of other area papers.

We read the local news to people who suffer from macular degeneration, vision complications due to stroke or diabetes and other eye ailments. The donation of the paper means that we can serve even more people, free of charge, so that even though they have sight issues, they are still in touch with their community. Mill levy increases, cards of thanks, anniversaries, obituaries, letters to the editor and other local news you can't get any other way is read via closed circuit radio or on the Internet.

We wanted to express the gratitude of our staff, volunteers and thousands of listeners to the *Leavenworth Times* and give people who may not be aware of our services the opportunity to learn about them. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Kansas Public Radio 91.5 for carrying our broadcast signal to the visually impaired of Kansas and Western Missouri. You can visit our Web site at http://reader.ku.edu or you can call toll free at 1-800-772-8898. Thanks for helping us Share the Gift of Sight Through Sound.

Peggy Sampson  
Outreach Coordinator  
Audio-Reader Network  
University of Kansas
Business boost:

STORY BY ARLEY HOSKIN
PHOTOS BY EDMMÉE RODRIGUEZ

Susie Pryor would not have labeled herself a typical master of business administration student.

Pryor joined MidAmerica Nazarene University’s MBA program a few years after she opened Brits, a British retail store in downtown Lawrence.

But like many graduate students, Pryor said she joined the MBA program because she wanted something more.

“I thought, I’m missing some pieces,” she said. “I wanted more accounting and finance and some marketing.”

MOVING ON UP

Many professionals view MBA programs as a direct path to upward mobility. The programs offered at most colleges and universities target working adults and offer flexible class schedules and online coursework.

“Most of our students are working adults,” said Wendy Acker, director of Avila University’s program.

Acker said most of Avila’s MBA students are satisfied with their careers but want the opportunity to excel in their fields.

“What they are looking for primarily is moving up in the companies they are working for,” Acker said.

MNU student Brent Mueller said he joined the program because he thinks the degree will increase his opportunities.

“I’m hoping to further my education and increase my possibilities,” said Mueller, a manager for Commerce Bank.

Promotions, increased salaries and entrepreneurial success are among the aspirations of MBA students. Acker said most students who graduate from an MBA program can expect to make more money.

“It’s a substantial increase,” Acker said.

Pryor said she thought the knowledge she would gain would enhance her business and leadership skills.

“I was more interested in entrepreneurship,” Pryor said.

Pryor started the program in 1997 and opened her second business, Au Marche, halfway through the two-year program. Au Marche, also in downtown Lawrence, specializes in gourmet foods and European kitchenware.

Pryor said Au Marche started as a project in her master’s in marketing class.

“I wrote that and thought, ‘this is viable,’” she said.

Pryor said she liked the program because of its real-world applications.

“I saw at MidAmerica that there isn’t a complete disconnect between the classroom and real life,” she said.

FINDING THE TIME

Pryor attended evening classes at MNU to finish her degree in two years. Most area MBA plans offer similar schedules to accommodate working adults.

Acker said Avila students typically finish their degrees in less than two years, but the program can be stretched to three years if necessary.

“It depends on the students and how long they want to progress through the program,” Acker said.

Dee Steinle, the director of the master’s programs at the University of Kansas, said that KU’s full-time MBA students usually finish within two years, but that part-time students can take as long as three and half years.

KU’s part-time program is at the university’s Edwards Campus in Overland Park.

“We see the part-time program as for people who are enhancing their career,” Steinle said.

Students interested in an online MBA program can check out the University of Phoenix’s Kansas City campus.

Brian Messer, the campus’ vice president, said the Kansas City location offers in-class and online options.

“Some students choose to attend class all online, which means they never step foot in a classroom,” Messer said.

“Some students flip back and forth depending on their work schedule.”

The University of Phoenix program takes between 18 and 20 months.

“It’s all full time,” Messer said.

Baker University has an MBA program based in Overland Park that also offers online courses.
Baker Marketing Director Kelly Belk said the university’s all-online program will be available this fall. Baker’s MBA programs take 22 months.

“We are trying to reach out to the community and help adult students finish their degree in a timely fashion,” Belk said.

**CONT FROM L**

**THE COST OF ADVANCEMENT**

The cost of MBA programs varies.
- MNU charges $15,770 for its 36-credit-hour program, which includes a laptop rental.
- Avila’s program ranges from 30 to 48 credit hours and costs $435 per credit hour.
- KU’s program at the Edwards Campus costs $23,815 and ranges from 42 to 48 credit hours.
- The University of Phoenix program ranges from 30 to 45 credit hours depending on the student’s undergraduate work and area of concentration within the MBA program.
- It charges $495 per credit hour for courses taken on
campus and $612 per credit hour for courses taken online.

Baker charges $420 per credit hour for in-class courses and $475 per credit hour for the program with in-class and online courses. The program that opens in the fall with all-online courses will cost $495 per credit hour.

Some companies provide tuition reimbursement for employees who pursue MBA degrees. Benjamin Hass said his employer, UMB Bank, paid for him to attend Baker’s Overland Park program.

Hass plans to graduate from the MBA program in August.

“When I came to UMB, I found out that they would pay for me to get my MBA,” he said.

Hass agreed to work for UMB for at least a year after he completes the program in order to receive the tuition assistance. He said he did not have to think twice about the opportunity to pursue an MBA debt free.

“I’m obviously in the finance industry, so getting an MBA opens a lot of doors for someone in my industry,” Hass said.

SHOPPING AROUND

Hass said the connection he received with fellow MBA students and professors at Baker sold him on the program.

“For most classes, about 50 percent of your work is individual work, and about 50 percent is group work,” Hass said. “That teamwork environment is totally applicable on a day-to-day basis.”

Pryor said she experienced similar unity among her peers at MNU, which places all of its MBA students in groups that go through the program together.

“The students, faculty and staff were all just phenomenal,” Pryor said.

Pryor went on to receive her doctorate in business from the University of Nebraska and now teaches business at Washburn University.

Pryor said she tells her students interested in MBA programs to check out the faculty at each school.

“You should look at the faculty and see what they have to offer,” Pryor said. “You need to look for programs that really do suggest that the folks that are planning them are thinking about technology and change. And that is what impressed me about MidAmerica.”

University of Kansas professor Doug Houston said he advises his students to shop around for an MBA program.

“Learn as much as you can about a program that might fit your needs,” Houston said. “They are not all the same.”

EXPERIENCE IS KING

While an MBA is a popular graduate degree, Houston said, it does not replace career experience.

“I generally tell undergraduates to get a few years of experience before they get an MBA,” Houston said.

“Without that, you don’t have anything to bounce
ideas that are floating around in class off of.”

Most programs require a few years of work experience.

Barry Greenstein, former president of the Overland Park consulting firm Business Dynamics Inc., said a degree never trumps solid career experience.

“I would have much rather hired someone with three to five years experience over someone with an MBA anytime,” he said.

Above all, Houston said, prospective students never should enter a program simply to obtain graduate-level credentials.

“I wouldn’t go back and get an MBA unless I really had a genuine interest in the content,” he said. “When you are ready to go back, you should have an interest and an excitement about what is going on.”
Students earn scholar awards

Two Garden City High School graduates have received some of the University of Kansas' most prestigious awards.

Luis Ricardo Cruz, an architectural studies major, was an Endowment Meritorious Scholar. The scholarship provides $500 to $2,500 a year for four years to high-achieving students who enhance the diversity of the student body. He is the son of Juan and Yolanda Cruz.

Michael Richard Rink,
Area students earn KU honors

The University of Kansas recently released the names of students who earned recognition on the spring honor roll.

They included the following Marion County students:

Burns: Shelby Plummer, daughter of Albert and Bonnie Plummer, senior, education.

Hillsboro: Adam Driggers, son of Darrell and Charlene Driggers, senior, fine arts; Emily Ratzlaff, daughter of Don and Gayla Ratzlaff, junior, engineering; and Megan Vogel, daughter of James and Joanne Vogel, senior, pharmacy professional.

Marion: Ashlee Moore, daughter of Pat and Jandee Moore, senior, nursing.

Peabody: Rachel Berns, daughter of Fred and Helen Berns, senior, education; and Jeremy Carroll, son of Tim and Patsy Litton, senior, liberal arts.

Ramona: Krista Heiser, daughter of Mark and Katherine Heiser, sophomore, liberal arts.
KU announces spring 2007 honor roll

LAWRENCE — More than 4,690 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the spring 2007 semester.

The honor roll comprises undergraduates who met requirements in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and in the schools of allied health, architecture, and urban planning, business, education, engineering, fine arts, journalism, nursing, and social welfare.

Honor roll criteria vary among the university’s academic units. Some schools honor the top 10 percent of students enrolled, some establish a minimum grade-point average and others raise the minimum GPA for each year students are in school. Students must complete a minimum number of credit hours to be considered for the honor roll.

**Anderson County**

Centerville: Amanda Rachelle Holloman, Liberal Arts, Sophomore, daughter of Melvin and Penny Holloman, Prairie View High School; Katherine Elaine Holloman, Liberal Arts, Junior, daughter of Melvin and Penny Holloman, Prairie View High School; Angela Whitney Morse, Liberal Arts, Sophomore, daughter of John Morse, Prairie View High School.

Colony: Meghan Diane Denchfield, Liberal Arts, Senior, daughter of Charles Denchfield, Home School - State of Kansas.

Garnett: Ashli Nicole Bowman, Education, Senior, daughter of Donna Bowman and Randy Bowman, Anderson County High School; Ian Oak Osler, Liberal Arts, Sophomore, son of Kenneth and Eileen Osler, Anderson County High School; Jeffrey A. Robinson, Liberal Arts, Senior, son of Richard S. and Jerry Lou Robinson, Anderson County High School; Richard Z. Robinson, Engineering, Sophomore, son of Richard and Jerry Robinson, Anderson County High School; Paul Robert Schreffler, Liberal Arts, Senior, son of Dorothy Schreffler Anderson County High School; Beilei Wang, Business, Senior, daughter of Christopher and Cui Hong Fink, Anderson County High School.

**Franklin County**

Rantoul: Natalie Christine Burkdoll, Nursing, Senior, daughter of Scott and Linda Burkdoll, Central Heights High School.
Picnic planned to welcome new students

Kansas University Alumni Association welcomes new students to a picnic in Manhattan, July 26.

The picnic will feature free food, T-shirts for new students and KU representatives to answer questions.

New University of Kansas students and their parents from Clay, Dickinson, Geary, Marshall, Pottawatomie, Riley and Washington counties will be welcomed into the KU family at the Jayhawk Generations Welcome Picnic at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 26, in Manhattan.

The KU Alumni Association and its Flint Hills chapter will greet the next generation of Jayhawks at Advanced Dental Arts, 4201 Anderson Ave. Area alumni, new students, students interested in learning more about KU and parents are invited to attend and enjoy complimentary food and beverages. Each new Jayhawk will also receive a free T-shirt.

Alumni association staff will arrive with the signature KU trailer full of grills, burgers and brats for the festivities. Current KU students, alumni and university representatives will mix and mingle with students to answer questions and offer advice.

For more information or to make reservations, visit www.kualumni.org or call the KU Alumni Association at (800) 584-2957 or e-mail kualumni@kualumni.org.