University: Deficiencies led to release of student records

TOPEKA (AP) — A breach of about 600 students’ privacy occurred at the University of Kansas last month because its math department didn’t follow standard policies for destroying discarded documents, officials have concluded.

But the university said Friday it had corrected the problems and had notified students and staff whose personal information was included in the documents.

The problems in handling documents became known when someone mailed documents anonymously to three newspapers. The packets came with letters saying the papers had come from either the department or the university’s recycling center.

It was the second report of such a privacy breach in two months.

The records included what appeared to be graded exams, job applications, change-of-grade forms, class rosters, seating charts and copies of health insurance cards and immigration forms, according to editors at the newspapers. Many contained Social Security or other identifying information, and a few contained credit card numbers, the university said.

“As best as we can tell, there were a variety of things that happened,” said spokesman Jack Martin. “It just appeared to be a situation where the policies were not followed with regards to destroying documents.”

The university requires documents with personal information to be stored so that only authorized employees have access to them or shredded when the papers are no longer needed.

The university said it placed 14 secure bins for collecting material to be destroyed around the math department’s offices and that the department has hired a shredding company.

The university also said it has given math department staff information on standard document destruction policies.

“Small, seemingly insignificant things can lead to serious breaches of security,” Jane Rosenthal, the university’s privacy officer, said in a statement. “Ensuring the privacy of data is something that has to take place every day, and it has to involve every member of the university community.”

In July, The University Daily Kansas, the campus newspaper, reported that documents were left in vacant offices in Wescoe Hall, which was being renovated. The documents included graded exams, student essays and schedule-changing forms.

And last month, two weeks before the latest security breach became known, the university announced a new program to improve the protection of private information.
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Procedural failures led to privacy breach

Graded exams included in KU students’ records released

By John Hanna
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A breach of about 600 students’ privacy occurred at The University of Kansas last month because its math department didn’t follow standard policies for destroying discarded documents, officials have concluded.

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Please see BREACH, Page 10A.
Breach:
Packets mailed to papers

Continued from Page 8A

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The packets of documents were mailed to The Kansan, The Kansas City Star and the Lawrence Journal-World. The university said it retrieved originals or copies of about 230 pages.

The writers of the letters accompanying the documents claimed to be former math teaching assistants or current employees of the recycling center, and they were critical of how the math department handled its records.
Privacy breach investigated by KU

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**KU suffers second privacy breach in 2 months**

Associated Press

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Jane Rosenthal, KU's privacy officer
Local doctor helps train student in rural medicine

By Carol Bronson
lifestyles@pratttribune.com

Aaron Zook is spending a month shadowing Dr. Alan Pribil at Pratt Internal Medicine, learning the "nuts and bolts" of medical practice in a rural area.

A native of Larned, Zook is a fourth year student at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Kansas City. After graduation in May, he will serve a three-year residency, plus another two or three years, if he chooses to specialize, before entering medical practice. He hopes to practice in a small town, such as Pratt, and said the KU Rural Preceptor Program that placed him with Pribil is the first chance he has had to work in a small town, other than for brief shadowing experiences.

"I am learning a lot about practicing medicine," Zook said. "Rural doctors and patients have a different relationship than in the city. It's refreshing, not a rat race. The physician takes time to talk with patients."

Much of what Pribil has to teach Zook is not taught in the academic setting. Office management, insurance, Medicare Part D and other payment issues change from year to year and schools can't adequately prepare students for the practical aspects of medicine. That's one of the reasons many young physicians choose to join large groups of doctors rather than going solo, Pribil said.

Zook also has the opportunity to observe a variety of cases.

"Here in Pratt we have a wide variety of medical illnesses and problems we can use as teaching cases," Pribil said. "They're (students) usually surprised with the level of care we provide here in Pratt."

An associate professor of medicine at the KU Medical Center, Pribil has mentored four or five students in the past. His approach is to introduce the student to a patient, allow him to formulate an assessment and a plan, then discuss treatment between themselves and then with the patient.

"I encourage the student to try to function independently under direct supervision," Pribil said.

Tribune photo by Carol Bronson

Dr. Alan Pribil and Aaron Zook, a student at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, look over a chart before meeting with a patient.
TALK discussion on 'Kite Runner'

"The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini will be the topic of the TALK Book Discussion Series meeting from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday in the Prescott Room of the Salina Public Library, 301 W. Elm. The discussion leader will be Beverly Mack, associate professor of African and African American Studies at the University of Kansas.

"The Kite Runner" is a 2003 best-selling novel, which spans three decades of conflict in Afghanistan. The story centers around the friendship of a wealthy Pashtun boy and the Hazara son of his father's servant.

Controversy has sprung up surrounding the upcoming release of a film based on the novel. Paramount Vantage, the studio distributing "The Kite Runner," is delaying the film's release in order to move its three schoolboy stars out of Kabul in response to fears that they could be attacked for their enactment of a culturally inflammatory rape scene, according to the New York Times News Service.

The TALK series will conclude Nov. 15 with a look at the experiences of a girl in a small town during the last summer of polio epidemics in Pat Cunningham Devoto's "My Last Days As Roy Rogers." Michaeline Chance-Reay, professor of secondary education at Kansas State University, will lead the discussion.
KCP&L chief: Coal needed

Utility exec Downey says plants needed to meet demand

BY JOHN HANNA
The Associated Press

LAWRENCE — A regional utility’s top executive acknowledged the dangers of global warming and promoted conservation Thursday, but he said coal-fired power plants still will be necessary to satisfy rising demands for energy.

Bill Downey, president and chief executive officer of Kansas City Power & Light, spoke during a conference where two Kansas scientists also outlined potential problems that climate change could cause. They include hotter summers and shorter crop-growing seasons in western Kansas, they said.

Discussions at the University of Kansas conference were timely because of a debate over proposed coal-fired power plants in Kansas and Missouri. Environmentalists worry about coal plants’ potential emissions of carbon dioxide, which most scientists see as a major contributor to global warming.

In Kansas, Sunflower Electric Power is seeking an air-quality permit from the state for its $3.6 billion plan to build two coal-fired plants in southwest Kansas. In Missouri, KCP&L is building a coal-fired plant northwest of Kansas City but promised environmentalists in March to develop wind power and energy conservation programs.

Downey said helping consumers reduce their energy use shows great promise but demand will still require higher energy production, including electricity from coal-fired plants. Technology to make coal burn cleaner and to capture and store carbon dioxide is an important part of reducing CO2 emissions, he said.

“Coal, oil and natural gas will remain indispensable,” he said. “It’s a hard truth that a rapidly growing world economy will require large increases in energy supplies over the next quarter-century.”

About 130 people attended the conference, including utility officials, legislative staff, university scientists, and federal, state and local officials. Organizers wanted the event to touch on issues involving energy, the environment and the economy because they viewed them as intertwined.

But the mix of messages about the need for higher energy production and the potential problems from global warming troubled conference attendee Dan Nagengast, executive director of the Kansas Rural Center.

“It adds up to doom,” he said, chuckling over the clashing themes. “I don’t know where this goes, but it doesn’t look good.”

According to federal statistics, the U.S. generates almost half of its electricity from coal-fired plants, and Kansas and Missouri rely even more heavily on them. Three-quarters of Kansas’ electricity comes from coal-fired plants, while the figure is 85 percent for Missouri.

The federal government expects Americans’ demand for energy to grow over the next several decades, and Downey said KCP&L’s experiences back up that assumption.

“It’s a global trend as well. Timothy Carr, a senior scientist with the Kansas Geological Survey, said the worldwide demand for energy will increase as China and other developing nations seek to improve their standards of living.

“It’s not going to come from renewables,” Carr said. “It’s going to come from coal.”

Nagengast questioned what he saw as an assumption that citizens of developing nations will want to emulate westerners’ over-consumption of goods and services.

“I think to draw these charts out, assuming that the whole world is going to be sort of as gluttonous as we are and ever-increasingly so, probably underestimates just how people perceive the world,” he said.

But even in forecasting higher energy demands and use of coal, Downey and Carr said the potential environmental issues must be addressed. Johannes Feddema, a University of Kansas geography professor, said computer models suggest western Kansas would become drier with a rise in temperatures. And Charles Rice, a professor of soil microbiology at Kansas State University, said rains could become less frequent but more intense.

Because of concerns about CO2 emissions, Nagengast and other environmentalists want utilities to promote conservation and develop wind power.

Downey described efficiency programs as “the best near-term option” but said that over the next decade, “The reality is we need everything that we have.”

“What I get concerned about is when people say, ‘Well, we’ll do it all with one thing or another.’” he said. “We can’t be placing one bet in this future.”
Energy vs. environment

- ENERGY NEEDS: Bill Downey, the top executive at Kansas City Power & Light, said Thursday that increasing demands for energy will require increased production of electricity from coal-fired plants, even as he promoted energy efficiency and acknowledged the dangers posed by carbon dioxide emissions.
- CLIMATE WARNING: Two Kansas scientists warned global warming could make western Kansas drier and shorten its crop-growing seasons. CO2 emissions are seen as a major cause of climate change.
- THE FORUM: They spoke at a conference at the University of Kansas.
- WHY IT'S TIMELY: Sunflower Electric Power wants to build two coal-fired plants in southwest Kansas. In northwest Missouri, KCP&L is building a coal-fired plant but has agreed to develop wind energy and efficiency programs as well.

On the Net

- The Institute of Policy and Social Research at the University of Kansas, which sponsored the conference: www.ipsr.ku.edu/
- Kansas City Power & Light Co.: www.kcpl.com/
- Kansas Rural Center: www.kansasruralcenter.org/
Program gives adults chance to further their education

Seward County Community College is one of seven schools in Kansas that will offer adult education programs through a new federal grant.

Senator Roberts announces $500,000 grant to the Kansas Board of Regents for adult education

By ROBERT PIERCE
Southwest Daily Times

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) recently announced a $500,000 grant to the Kansas Board of Regents for the Ready for College: Adult Education Transitions Program.

These grants will assist seven Kansas community colleges in implementing project Next Step.

Project Next Step will be implemented in Butler Community College, Garden City Community College, Hutchinson Community College, Kansas City Community College, Neosho County Community College and Seward County Community College.

The funds will also be used to enhance adult secondary education curriculum by including higher level language arts and mathematics courses and to identify support services to facilitate their transition into post-secondary education.

The funds will be used to support state and local efforts to increase the rate at which adults successfully complete adult secondary education. Senator Roberts is a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Donna Shank, vice chairman of the Kansas Board of Regents, said Next Step is a transition grant her board put together in collaboration with the University of Kansas and some community colleges in Kansas.

"It's to try and increase the rate at which students who are going to the adult education programs who have dropped out of high school for whatever reason and weren't successful there," she said. "Then they entered the adult education program to get their GED or their Kansas high school diploma, but only 10 percent of those students are going on from there into post-secondary education."

Shank said the goal of Next Step is to try to get more adult education students to complete the program and move on to a post-secondary education system, something she said can be difficult at times.

"The goal and the focus of the adult education program is to get them their high school diploma," she said. "What this grant is going to try and do is change the focus and the goal not only to get a high school diploma but also to have those students enter a post-secondary education, whether to get a degree, whether to start a career or to simply get a better paying job."

Shank said the institutions selected for Next Step, including...
Adults …

Continued from Page A1

Seward, have had very successful adult education programs.

"(SCCC has) been very successful in getting students through our program," she said. "It's a great program. It's a model for the state. I'm sure that's one of the reasons Seward County was asked to participate in the program. Senator Roberts' office was great to work with on this grant. I understand there were 47 applications submitted for the grant and only four selected, and ours was one of those."

Shank said when Next Step will enable adult education programs at the institutions selected to do a better job of getting students through, not only Seward County's but the state's entire adult education program, which is administered through the Board of Regents, is a national model.

"We were named best practices of state for adult education, so we are at the forefront of being successful in that regard," she said. "This is going to allow us to go even further and transition those students on into higher education, which, hopefully, means even more opportunities for those students that will hopefully improve the work force in those communities. I think it's going to be a terrific opportunity for us."
Representing Sterling High School at the Kansas Honors banquet Sept. 19, at the Holiday Manor Convention Center in McPherson were, left to right, Anna-Lara Cook, Joseph Stromberg, Principal Bill Anderson, Corey Childs, Ashley Stout and Superintendent Fred Dierksen.

**SHS students in Honors Program**

Four Sterling High School students, Anna-Lara Cook, Joseph Stromberg, Corey Childs and Ashley Stout were nominated for the Kansas Honors Program which recognizes the outstanding academic achievements of Kansas high school seniors. The students were honored at a banquet at McPherson Sept. 19.

The program, begun in 1971 by the University of Kansas Alumni Association, each year honors students through regional programs in all 105 Kansas counties.

To be nominated, students must be graduating seniors who rank in the top 10 percent of their classes, based on academic records through the previous semester.

Each Kansas Honor Scholar receives a Kansas Honors Program certificate and a special Kansas Honors program edition of “The American Heritage Dictionary.”