In the recent 2008 College Sustainability Report Card, a mere 3 percent out of 200 schools received an "A" for their efforts in environmental responsibility. However, a silver lining remains within this bleak statistic.

An astounding 68 percent of schools have improved their overall grades from last year, proving that universities (albeit slowly but surely) are making important changes.

The Star published the grades received by area campuses. The University of Missouri and its campuses received a C, the University of Kansas received a C-, and Kansas State received a D+ (Karen Dillon, "Getting red marks for green efforts," Feb. 19).

The Sustainability Report Card shows that our campuses have a lot of ground to cover when it comes to institutional change. After all, tremendous changes require significant time and funds in order to make progress. But the study failed to include an influential and active component of campus sustainability efforts.

The measure of student environmental activism on campus is a healthy indicator of a university's commitment to sustainability. It is the students who will one day provide the support leading to institutional change by the administration.

K-State has seen a dramatic influx in individuals and student groups interested in sustainability on campus. Some organizations, including Students for Environmental Action and Emerging Green Builders, have been fighting for sustainability and the environment for years. However, this school year, the number of students who are joining longstanding efforts is truly astounding.

The Student Governing Association passed a resolution in support of sustainability, and two pairings of student body president and vice presidential candidates included sustainability as a platform issue this year. Concerned students rallied together to form a comprehensive Student Sustainability Coalition which will serve to represent student interests in creating policy.

The Greek community, with more than 3,000 members, has created a Greeks Going Green campaign as one of only 10 universities nationwide selected for a national Climate Crews grant. Student support resulted in city-university funds being earmarked for a recycling center. And the Manhattan community is heavily involved too; the Sunset Zoo's Go Green program targets local schools, businesses, houses, and residence halls. Even this year's St. Patrick's Day had a "Go Green" theme.

The latest Sustainability Report Card does not truly reflect what is going on at our area schools. K-State, KU, and the University of Missouri have active students fighting for these causes. Rest assured, the future is in good hands.

Molly Hamm is a junior at Kansas State University and founder of Greeks Going Green. She lives in Shawnee.
Former Kansas City mayor Kay Barnes greeted basketball fans Friday at Kansas City Live. “People, a lot I don’t know, make it a point to come up to me and say thank you,” she said.

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**FORMER MAYOR REVELS IN DOWNTOWN REBIRTH**

Former mayor Kay Barnes may not have enjoyed the limelight last week when the Big 12 came to town, but the spontaneous thanks from ordinary fans was bright enough.

“I’ve been amazed at how many people have stopped me and commented on it and are very excited about everything that’s available,” Barnes said Friday as she walked through the festive crowd jammed into the Kansas City Live plaza.

“It probably surpasses what we envisioned in terms of the level of enthusiasm and excitement about the district and the arena.”

She was wearing a black windbreaker emblazoned with the “Think KC” slogan, but a discrete KU pendant revealed her true colors.

Around her, visitors jockeyed in line for $7 beer, reunited with friends and spent lots of money, a slice of it going toward repaying the city debt taken on to help build the Power & Light District. Their hotel rooms and car rentals were covering the Sprint Center obligation.

At the beginning of the decade, community leaders knew Kansas City needed a new arena if it was to continue hosting the Big 12.
COLLISON: Work is not complete, Barnes says

FROM D10

12 men’s basketball tournament and all the prestige and out-of-town spending that went along with it. Barnes exercised the political leadership to make it happen.

The Civic Council had funded the 2001 Sasaki plant that suggested an entertainment district in the South Loop could help revive downtown for residents and out-of-towners. Again, it was Barnes who took the point position to push it from theory to reality.

Now, an hour or so before her beloved University of Kansas was to place in the tournament, her former honor was savoring the fruits of her vision for Kansas City. The partly completed Power & Light District was humming, Grand Boulevard was choked with pedestrians and the Sprint Center shined.

“It probably surpasses what we envisioned in terms of the level of enthusiasm and excitement about the district and the arena.”

FORMER MAYOR KAY BARNES

Like many people, Barnes had wanted the Cordish Co. to have more of the Power & Light District restaurants and bars open for the tournament, but she wouldn’t let her characteristic optimism wane.

“I know all of us would have liked for everything to open at exactly the same time, but maybe there’s some ongoing excitement because there’s more to look forward to,” she said.

As she walked beneath the spacious KC Live canopy, folks in the crowd shouted congratulations to her or posed for a photo, many saying the new downtown venues made them proud of Kansas City.

“It’s been amazing,” Barnes said. “People, a lot I don’t know, make it a point to come up to me and say thank you.”

If she had any sour feelings about not being part of the official side of the event, Barnes didn’t show it.

“That doesn’t bother me, I understand elected office,” she said. “When you’re in office, you are involved in everything, and when you’re out of office, other people take the lead in those kinds of things.”

Leadership remains very much a part of her though, and Barnes had some ideas about continuing the momentum of the entertainment district and arena.

“It’s really important we have a new convention hotel,” she said. “Hopefully, the planning is under way for that because it’s going to take years to get it actually constructed.

“It’s important the transportation issue be dealt with, which it is,” Barnes added. “There also needs to be planning now for an addition to the convention center. We need more housing downtown and in the greater downtown area.”

The bottom line:

“Great progress has been made and yet it’s got to continue.”

To reach Kevin Collison, call 816-234-4289 or send e-mail to kcollison@kcstar.com.
KU TAKES A RARE APPROACH TO CREATING DRUGS

Smart ideas alone will not cure cancer.

University laboratories in this region and across the country are brimming with brilliant researchers who routinely make intriguing discoveries and come up with possible disease-defeating innovations.

Yet it's a long and difficult journey from a professor's idea to a pill that helps a patient.

That's why the University of Kansas has formed a new team to shepherd more of these projects through the drug development process.

The university has pulled together a corps of former pharmaceutical industry executives and project specialists. They work closely with chemists, biologists, other scientists, pharmacy experts, physicians and surgeons in a way that is rare, and possibly unique, among American universities.

"We are focused on the end of the game," said Scott Weir, director of the Office of Therapeutics, Discovery and Development for the KU Cancer Center.

Today's Star Business Weekly cover story details the work of one of these project teams. The scientists and doctors refining a combination surgery-chemo-

therapy cancer treatment could be the first among their KU peers to begin clinical testing of their innovation in human patients.

University leaders have sky-high aspirations for the overall initiative.

Within a decade they want KU to be the No. 1 university in producing potential new drugs.

They are devoting a growing roster of experts to the effort. The teams are drawing on resources such as the university's high-throughput screening laboratory that uses sophisticated computerized machines that can identify a handful of potentially effective drugs out of hundreds of thousands of chemical compounds.

Applying private-industry sensibilities is key to advancing the projects.

This means tapping industry partners, contract research organizations or others if the expertise does not exist within the university to handle a key stage of a drug development effort, Weir said.

"We don't have to do everything here at KU," Weir said.
GERTZEN:
‘Go or no-go’
decisions are new to KU

It also means imposing what corporate project managers call “go or no-go” decisions. Experiments that do not succeed call for devoting limited resources on other projects.

“The ‘go, no-go’ is definitely new to the university,” said Melinda Broward, a program director in KU’s drug discovery office. She had extensive experience at companies such as Marion Laboratories before joining the university.

Weir wasn’t sure how well the approach would be received by professors.

Researchers attempting to move up within the university and gain tenure must produce advances chronicled in scientific journals. Abandoning projects can bring unwelcome delays or obstacles to these pursuits.

Weir’s optimism about the chances for success grew when working recently with a KU researcher who made a promising discovery.

Later tests showed that the potential drug triggered dangerous side effects. The development team included the scientist in the additional testing, and it was clear to everybody what should be done.

“When we killed the compound, there was no debate, no hard feelings,” Weir said. “They are data-driven decisions.”

The team followed up by developing an idea and seeking grants to build on knowledge gained from the original research that yet might produce a new drug.

“So let’s now put our energy into a similar concept, but go in a different direction,” Weir said.

Time will tell whether the different direction KU is taking with drug development is worthy for other universities to try.

To reach Jason Gertzen, call 816-234-4899 or send e-mail to jgertzen@kcstar.com.
CyDex tries a new formula
Company wants to raise money to develop its own drug products

BY ROB ROBERTS | STAFF WRITER

CyDex Pharmaceuticals Inc. has a new do-it-yourself strategy, and it is planning to go public to help carry it out.

Founded in 1993, the Lenexa biotechnology startup originally focused on licensing its patented Captisol technology to improve the water solubility and stability of other pharmaceutical companies’ products.

That strategy has been relatively successful, resulting in more than 30 Captisol licensing agreements and 2007 revenue of $12.7 million. But now the company is poised to make and market its own Captisol-enhanced drugs, and it’s preparing to sell as much as $50 million in common stock to aid the transformation.

CyDex filed a registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 12 for an initial public offering. But the timing of the offering, which would result in CyDex shares being traded on the Nasdaq Global Market, has not been determined, CEO John Siebert said.

“The market could, as some would say, go into the crapper even worse than it is,” Siebert said.

Meanwhile, CyDex’s biotechnological clock is ticking.
One reason for the IPO, Siebert acknowledged, is that CyDex largely is financed by venture capital, “and most venture capital funds want to get their money out at a certain point.” But there’s also a more flattering reason for the new strategy and IPO.

“We have learned what Captisol can do and how to work with the regulatory system by watching our (licensing) partners,” Siebert said.

As a result, CyDex could become the first local biotech startup, based on locally generated research, to become a public company—a significant step for the area’s burgeoning life sciences initiative.

“The ultimate, mutually reinforcing goals of our varied, regional life sciences efforts are better patient care and quality of life for our residents coupled with high-quality economic development,” said Irvine Hockaday Jr., chairman of the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute Inc.

Hockaday said the recent success and future promise of CyDex Pharmaceuticals are wonderful examples of our regional life sciences potential.

To help ensure continuing success, CyDex officials plan to limit their new drug-making activity in two ways. First, the company will focus on drugs for the acute-care hospital market, CyDex CFO Allen Roberson said. Second, CyDex will make and market drugs that couple Captisol with off-patent compounds that can be improved significantly by the marriage, Siebert said.

Valentino Stella, who co-invented Captisol with his then-graduate student Roger Rajewski, said the strategy will result in significantly lower costs for clinical trials and U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval than would taking new active pharmaceutical ingredients through the regulatory process.

Stella, a distinguished professor of pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of Kansas, began working on Captisol as part of a search for safe means of solubilizing and stabilizing cancer drugs. But the technology was first licensed by Pfizer Inc. as an ingredient in an antifungal medication called Vfend, one of four Captisol-containing products now on the market, Stella said.

Captisol technology involves large molecules, called cyclodextrins, that Siebert said could be envisioned as doughnuts. The outside of the “doughnut” is hydrophilic, meaning it loves water, and the inside is hydrophobic, or water-repelling.

About half of active pharmaceutical ingredients are likewise hydrophobic. So when they are put into solution with Captisol, they begin jumping from doughnut hole to doughnut hole.

“When you inject that solution into, let’s say, your bloodstream, you get dilution,” Siebert said. “That means that when the molecule comes out of the Captisol, it doesn’t have another Captisol to go into. So it goes to the active sites or, in other words, where it needs to go.”

Current patents associated with Captisol are set to lapse between 2010 and 2018. But Siebert said CyDex has patents pending for new, improved Captisol technology and manufacturing processes. And, Roberson said, the company benefits from a “robust master file,” which includes safety and clinical studies conducted by Pfizer and others on drugs containing Captisol.

CyDex, which plans to use a portion of its IPO proceeds for further clinical trials and product development, has rolled up a $22 million deficit during its 14-year history, largely due to research-and-development investments. But compared with other biotech startups its age, CyDex’s deficit and annual revenue compare favorably. And future profits may lie in its pipeline.

The company has 12 new Captisol-enabled drugs in its portfolio—six it plans to retain rights to and six it plans to license at some stage in their development.

One “retained” candidate is Cerebyx, an anti-seizure injectable based on fosphenytoin, one of five drugs Stella has invented or co-invented at KU. Combining fosphenytoin with Captisol allows the drug to be stored at room temperature rather than having to be refrigerated—an example of the types of Captisol benefits CyDex will invest in.

Stella said that CyDex is the third startup his research has launched. Considering that track record, Siebert has some advice for Kansas City-area life sciences leaders: “Go out and hire five or 10 more Val Stellas.”
More states step in to limit carbon emissions

BY JEANNINE KORANDA
Eagle Topeka bureau

TOPEKA — Regulating greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide, could drive businesses away from Kansas, some argue.

But others say limits on greenhouse gases are coming, no matter what the state does.

Federal lawmakers are considering plans to reduce greenhouse gases, and at least 17 other states are working to limit their state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius on Friday vetoed a bill that would have allowed two new coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas and stripped the state's top environmental regulator of the power to block future plants based on their carbon emissions.

The decision to block the new coal-fired plants was based in part on an April 2007 Supreme Court ruling in which the court sided with Massachusetts and 11 other states that sued the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide, the court ruled, are pollutants.
More states step in to limit carbon emissions

By Jeannine Koranda
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Greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide, the court ruled, are pollutants...
and the EPA had to regulate emissions that contributed to climate change.

There was no deadline in the ruling and the EPA has not issued any decision, said Robert Glicksman, the Robert W. Wagstaff distinguished professor of law at the University of Kansas, who specializes in environmental law.

"Most knowledgeable observers agree that climate change regulation is inevitable," he said.

Construction or operation of at least 59 proposed coal-fired power plants were halted last year, either by regulators or by utilities, he said.

Currently, 17 states seek to cap carbon dioxide emissions and 25 support mandates for renewable energy, according to the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. More are considering limits.

Maryland lawmakers, for example, are considering a measure that would impose a 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gases from current levels by all state industries by 2020, and a 90 percent cut by 2050.

Environmentalists argue that allowing Sunflower Electric Power Corp.’s new plant to be built could end up costing existing industries in Kansas if the state is eventually forced to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions.

But Kansas lawmakers who support Sunflower’s proposed $3.6 billion expansion in Holcomb say that limiting carbon emissions in Kansas could chase businesses off and threaten future power supplies.

“If we do (regulate carbon emissions) we’re going to lock a lot of business in the head, especially if we do it in the state of Kansas and no one else does,” said Rep. Don Myers, R-Derby, who sits on the House Committee on Energy and Utilities. "Carbon emissions caps won’t affect only power generation. Ethanol plants, refineries and aircraft manufacturing plants also produce carbon emissions," he said.

Is regulation necessary?

While there are other greenhouse gases, people tend to focus on carbon emissions because they are the most prevalent type, said Josh Dorner, spokesman for the Sierra Club.

The National Energy Information Center estimates that 84 percent of greenhouse gases come from carbon dioxide emissions — mostly created by burning fossil fuels.

When Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary Rod Bremby rejected permits for the two new 700-megawatt plants, he cited the annual 11 million tons of carbon dioxide the plant was expected to emit and its potential harm to the environment and public health.

Opponents have argued that the decision hinged on an emission the state did not regulate and something not everyone believes is a problem.

“When you talk about a pollutant, that is something that is really going to harm you,” Myers said.

He and others in the Legislature don’t believe carbon emissions are a problem — or at least, not something Kansas should regulate.

Regulation needs to come from the federal level, said Sen. Jay Emmer, R-Lindsborg, who helped draft the Senate’s coal-power bill.

“It should be something that is uniform throughout the United States because the greenhouse gases and the CO2, all of those issues know no state boundary, know no city boundary,” he said.

Power economics

Power plants aren’t the only producers of greenhouse gases, and many lawmakers worry about the effect limitations could have on other businesses, such as the aviation industry and manufacturing.

“If we’re going to have this larger discussion about CO2 limitations, we need to talk about all the business we have across our state” that produce greenhouse gases, said Sen. Carolyn McGinn, R-Sedgwick.

“It’s pretty complicated when you start talking about regulating CO2 and how you regulate it,” agreed Senate President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton.

The discussion also has to consider the state’s older coal-powered plants, which have permits coming up for renewal, Morris said. About 70 percent of the state’s electricity comes from coal.

Coal is still the least expensive and most extensive energy source for the country, with 250 to 400 years of coal deposits remaining, Myers said. Without coal, it could be hard to meet future energy demands, he said, and regulating carbon emissions could drive up the cost of producing power.

“And the consumer is going to pay for it,” he said.

Reach Jeannine Koranda at 785-296-3006 or jkoranda@wichitaeagle.com.
The 2009 budget passed by the Kansas House this week would deliver on some important priorities for Wichita, including aviation research and training. But among the items deferred for the wrap-up session is one of huge benefit to the whole state as well as Wichita—a proposed $50 million bond issue for an expansion of the University of Kansas pharmacy school. To its credit, the House has approved $1 million to get the planning started for the expansion. But time is short: Seven counties in the state have no pharmacy, and another 30 have only one each. KU now has more applicants than places in its pharmacy school, which would grow by 45 students at the Lawrence campus and by 40 in Wichita under the expansion. "This is a priority not just for KU, Lawrence and Wichita, but for the whole state," said state Rep. Raj Goyle, D-Wichita.