Unified Government Ethics Commissioner Mike Bixler has resigned, and Gilbert Castro has been appointed as his replacement. Dr. H. George Fredrickson has resigned his post of the ethics administrator, and Ruth Benien has been named as the new administrator.

The new ethics commissioner is appointed by an Ad Hoc Ethics Commission Appointment Panel, consisting of Phil Sieve, chief judge of the Wyandotte County District Court; Jerome Gorman, district attorney of Wyandotte County; and Tom Standish, legislative auditor of Wyandotte County.

Gilbert Castro was formerly a member of the El Centro Board for 28 years, having served as both chairman and treasurer on two different occasions during his tenure. He has also served as a United Way Board member.

The Ethics Commission consists of five members, the other four are Rhonda Smiley, J. Anthony Snorgrass, John Zawacki and Mary Ann Slattery. Dr. H. George Frederickson, served as ethics administrator for the Unified Government for 10 years.

Ruth Marie Benien has a juris doctorate degree from the University of Kansas School of Law and a B.S.J. from the University of Kansas with a major in Journalism and a minor in Personnel Administration. She has practiced law in Wyandotte County for the last 25 years and served as president of the Wyandotte County Bar Association, the Association of Woman Lawyers of Greater Kansas City and the Kansas Trial Lawyers Association. During the course of her practice she has served as a member of and conducted investigations for the local and state bar association ethics and grievance panels applying the Code of Professional Responsibility to the actions and conduct of lawyers. She has served as mediator and participant in numerous mediations and has experience developing and presenting employee training issues as evidenced by extensive seminar presentations. She is a graduate of the Wyandotte County Leadership 2000 program and has served on or worked with numerous civic and community panels and groups.
The board in charge of Kansas' higher education system wants to make sure the cost of attending a state university or college doesn't increase too much next year, but it's not ready to impose a cap.

The Board of Regents expects to receive proposals for new tuition rates from the universities in May and to vote upon them in June. On Wednesday, the board discussed whether it should give university officials any guidance — or impose a limit on what they can propose.

The regents voted 7-2 to let universities, community colleges and technical schools propose their own tuition rates. But they also strongly suggested that the increases sought be 6 percent or less.

The state's six public universities have instituted double-digit percentage tuition increases in the last five years. Since 2002, increases have ranged from 42.2 percent at Fort Hays State to 136 percent at the University of Kansas.
The opportunity to expand one's knowledge at the University of Kansas Edwards Campus in Overland Park is not limited to young people or adults enhancing their career potential. A special program designed mainly for people age 50 and older will begin in a few days.

The purpose is to enable older individuals to extend their learning experience. Students will not take tests or notes.

The subjects vary. One is an introduction to DNA and includes a hands-on laboratory session where participants will detect DNA. Another examines the importance of Japan to America. Participants will spend one session on a tour of the Japanese gallery at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Mo. Still another course traces the history of Western classical music.

Two of the six offerings in Johnson County will be presented at the Tallgrass Creek Retirement Community. Classes will also be offered in Lawrence, Topeka and Clay County, Mo.

The program is provided by Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, a part of continuing education at KU. As the name of the institute implies, learning is a lifelong experience.
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LAWRENCE — The University of Kansas honored 231 student athletes named to the Athletic Director's Honor Roll for 2007 during halftime of the KU-Iowa State men's basketball game.

"Student athletes enrolled in at least 12 credit hours who achieved a semester grade-point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during spring or fall 2007 are eligible for the honor. Among those with special recognition are 73 students who earned 4.0 GPAs in one or both semesters.

Athletes from this area honored include Brianna Dahn Flickinger of Burrton, daughter of Corey and Rae Ann Flickinger. Also honored was Steven Christian Foster, son of Steven and Loretta Foster of Sedgwick.

The Athletic Director's Honor Roll recognizes students in intercollegiate baseball; men's and women's basketball; football; golf; rowing; soccer; softball; swimming and diving; tennis; track and field; and volleyball. KU is a member of the Big 12 Conference.

"The student athletes who represent our program and the University of Kansas are an outstanding group of young people," said Athletics Director Lew Perkins. "They give every ounce of energy to compete in their sports and then they go home, completely tired, and study. We have every reason to be extremely proud of all their efforts — especially their work in the classroom this past fall. Congratulations to all the student athletes, our terrific KU faculty and to our outstanding athletics academic support staff."

Honorees represent 28 Kansas counties and 39 other states and countries. They are listed below by home county, state or country; sport; major; level in school or degree completed; parents' names; and previous schools attended.
FOR THE INDEPENDENT

LAWRENCE — More than 4,540 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the fall 2007 semester.

These students, from KU’s Lawrence campus and the schools of allied health and nursing in Kansas City, Kan., represent 96 of 105 Kansas counties, 43 other states and the District of Columbia and 39 other countries.

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

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. Students receiving honors were:

- Melissa Christine Morris, Burrton, daughter of Brenda and Timothy Morris, Liberal Arts Undergraduate, freshman 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
- Aaron Jacob Keller, Halstead, son of Cecil and Valerie Keller, Liberal Arts Undergraduate, senior 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
- Elizabeth Ann Major, Halstead, daughter of Terry and Joan Major, Liberal Arts Undergraduate, sophomore 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
- Lindsey Nicole Miles, Halstead, daughter of Kirk and Shelley Miles, Nursing Undergraduate, senior 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
- Austin Joseph Pyle, Halstead, son of Kevin and Mary Jo Pyle, Engineering Undergraduate, senior 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
- Jessica Lynn Scharff, Sedgwick, daughter of Mitch and Sherry Scharff, Nursing Undergraduate, senior 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
- Crystal Lynn Leming, Sedgwick, daughter of Ron and Kelli Arrowsmith, Liberal Arts Undergraduate, junior 2007, fall honor roll, Halstead High School.
Regents want to limit tuition hikes

TOPEKA — The board in charge of Kansas' higher education system wants to make sure the cost of attending a state university or college doesn't increase too much next year, but it's not ready to impose a cap.

The Board of Regents expects to receive proposals for new tuition rates from the universities in May and to vote upon them in June. On Wednesday, the board discussed whether it should give university officials any guidance — or impose a limit on what they can propose.

The regents voted 7-2 to let universities, community colleges and technical schools propose their own tuition rates. But they also strongly suggested that the increases sought be 6 percent or less.

The state's six public universities have instituted double-digit percentage tuition increases in the last five years. Since 2002, increases have ranged from 42.2 percent at Fort Hays State to 136 percent at the University of Kansas.

Presidents of all six of the universities told the regents their tuition increases would be less than 6 percent next year.

Student leaders who spoke at the meeting said they had been involved in setting tuition at their schools and they don't want lower tuition if it affects the quality of their education.
Couple donates $1 million to KU

LAWRENCE — A Chase County couple has made a $1 million bequest to the University of Kansas, to be used for research into autism.

Thomas and Wanda Pyle, who ranched near Elmdale, asked that most of their estate be used for research and service at the university to improve children's lives. Thomas Pyle died in 2001 and Wanda Pyle died in 2006.

The university said Wednesday that the bequest will benefit the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies.

Steve Warren, director of the institute, said the bequest will be used to fund research into the causes and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, which affect one in every 150 children in the U.S.
KU announces honor roll

More than 4,540 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the fall 2007 semester. Derby students included: Jaime R. Andrews, daughter of Neil and Sandy Andrews, senior liberal arts major; Eric Michael Beahan, son of Amy Beahan, junior fine arts major; Jessica C. Dean, daughter of Deborah Titus, junior liberal arts major; Jessica Lauren Dotter, daughter of Gregg and Rae Dotter, junior liberal arts major.

Kathryn Marie Durrenberger, daughter of Paul and Vicki Durrenberger, junior liberal arts major; Drew R. Fowler, son of Cynthia Fowler, senior liberal arts major; Zachary D. Groendyk, son of David and Kathleen Groendyk, junior liberal arts major; David Hale Heckathorn, son of Nancy and Kelly Powers, freshman liberal arts major.

Kelli J. Stout, daughter of Wayne and Debbie Stout, senior liberal arts major; Jennifer Lynne Torline, daughter of Lori and John Torline, junior liberal arts/journalism major; Margaret Ann Tran, daughter of Chinh and Lan Tran, sophomore liberal arts major; Cameron Reid Walker, son of Alan and Susan Walker, freshman business major.

Amber Marie Wanklyn, daughter of Mark and Sandy Venskus, pharmacy professional prof 1; Brian Mathew Wells, son of Gary and Eileen Wells, senior fine arts/liberal arts major; Benjamin Matthew Westerman, son of James and Sandra Westerman, junior business major; Bryan Kenneth Wolford, son of Dean and Kathy Wolford, senior liberal arts major.

Lyvette R. Good, daughter of Virgil and Sandra Good, senior liberal arts major; Emylisa Jo Warrick, daughter of Joseph Warrick and Elisa Chee-Warrick, sophomore liberal arts major.

Natasha L. Parman, daughter of Craig and Dena Parman, senior education major; Mark David Price, sophomore liberal arts major; Tara Larin Price, daughter of Gabrielle Turner, senior liberal arts major; Trace Ryan Rodgers, son of Glenda Rodgers, senior business major; Aaron Hunter Stables, son of Tom and Jill Stables, freshman liberal arts major.
The University of Kansas debate team has kicked off the 2008 spring semester with a No. 1 overall ranking in the National Debate Tournament varsity debate after strong showings at several tournaments.

Christopher Stone, son of Douglas and Gloria Stone, a sophomore in political science, is a debate team member. At the University of Texas at Dallas tournament Jan. 12-14, he and Nathaniel Johnson, a Manhattan senior, took first place in a field of 60 teams.