As a member of the Kansas Board of Regents since 2005, I am very concerned about tuition increases. Regent schools pay their bills with money received from the Legislature, tuition and donations. Twenty years ago, Kansas State University and the University of Kansas received 52 percent of their budgets from the Legislature, but today that figure is only 26 percent. Regent schools have tried to make up this huge budget loss by getting people like you and me to donate to their schools. Donations have increased, but not enough to offset the big loss from the Legislature.

I will do all I can to keep tuition costs down, but the students and their schools need more help from the Legislature.

DAN LYKINS
Topeka
Heights, Newton students to attend German contest

Students from Heights and Newton will be among 300 high school and junior high school students at Schuelerkongress, a competition for students studying the German language, Saturday at the University of Kansas.

Schuelerkongress means "student congress." Activities include contests in poetry recitation, prose reading, spelling, poster making, oral proficiency and culture.
Bria Chism was a bright-eyed girl ready to conquer the world, until the African-American 6 year old was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia.

Her family searched for a blood marrow donor in the U.S., but found a shortage of African-American donors and learned matches are usually found in the recipient’s ethnic community. After resorting to an overseas search, Bria received a successful transplant, but it was too late, and other aspects of the illness had overcome the kindergartner’s fragile body; she died in her grandfather’s arms on July 2, 1999.

Because of this tragedy, the Bria T. Chism foundation was created by Bria’s grandparents, Walter and Gail Chism, to increase awareness of the need of bone marrow donations in the minority communities.

The Chisms came to the K-State Student Union Courtyard Sunday afternoon to prompt students to register to donate blood marrow.

Only 20 percent of black people find a bone marrow match, while 50 percent of Hispanics and 80 percent of Caucasians do, according to the Heart of America Bone Marrow Registry.

Gloria Conner, president of Zeta Phi Beta sorority Inc., said she met the founders of the organization at a KU blood marrow drive, and decided it was something she wanted to bring to Manhattan. Beta Sigma Chi Christian Sorority co-sponsored the event.

Conner, senior in family studies and human services, said the Sunday drive successfully registered 31 students to donate. She said her sorority is planning to become certified to register people so they can have drives more often at K-State.

Walter and his wife sat patiently in the Union waiting for passersby to stop by and donate to the cause.

“Sometimes a blood marrow transplant is the only way...”

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they can survive," he said.

The couple is on a mission, he said.

"I felt something needed to be done; if we could do anything to help we were going to do it," he said.

The Bria T. Chism Foundation has traveled to many college campuses in Missouri and Kansas to get young minorities interested in registering to be a donor.

He said they have been working closely with historically black fraternities and sororities, like Zeta Phi Beta, to achieve this demographic.

"They have been very helpful and very willing to come forward to register," Chism said.

The foundation not only registers donors, but they also serve as support groups for families who are experiencing financial hardship due to expensive hospital bills or educating families affected by the diseases that would cause a need for a marrow transplant about their options available for finding a match, he said.

Chism encourages all students, but specifically minorities of African-American, Latino, American Indian, multi-race, Asian and Hawaiian and Pacific Islander decent, to become registered, stressing that as a donor there is no cost and the recipient pays for all of the costs.

According to the National Marrow Donor Program Web site, because tissue types are inherited, patients are more likely to match someone from their own race or ethnicity.

Adding more donors from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds increases the likelihood that all patients will find the match they need.

On any given day, more than 6,000 men, women and children are searching the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) Registry for a life-saving donor.

These patients have leukemia, lymphoma and other life-threatening diseases that can be treated by a bone marrow or cord blood transplant. For many of these patients, a transplant may be the best and only hope of a cure.

One reward besides saving someone's life is the donor can actually meet the person receiving their marrow.

"It is a tremendous thing to do," he said. "You have the opportunity to save someone’s life."
KU student takes on special project

An Independence student at the University of Kansas will help children with life-threatening illnesses during an Alternative Spring Break.

Tyler Smith, a junior majoring in pre-pharmacy, is one of 49 KU students who will work at seven Alternative Spring Break sites. Smith will work with Give Kids the World Village, a nonprofit wish-granting resort facility near Orlando, Fla. Volunteers work in supportive jobs such as operating rides, planning family activities or helping at concession stands.

KU students will work March 15-22 with agencies in Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Washington D.C. An Alternative Spring Break counts as one unit for the University Honors Program, which requires students who want to graduate with honors to complete one or two honors units outside the classroom.
Interesting, isn't it, what some individuals or companies will do to try to win the votes of state legislators or the general citizenry?

Two cases in the last week are perfect examples.

Officials of Sunflower Electric Power Corp., the company that wants to build two coal-fired electrical plants near Holcomb, said they would give $2.5 million to Kansas State University if permits for the plants were approved by June 1.

The offer was revealed to members of the Kansas House just before a vote on legislation to allow construction of the plants.

... It will be interesting to watch the final vote and any effort to override an expected veto by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. Some consider Sunflower's offer almost as a bribe.

The other example is the offer by the Hall Family Foundation to purchase several buildings in Johnson County, one of which would be used for University of Kansas' cancer research program, if Johnson County residents approve an eighth-cent sales tax later this year...

The campaign or scheme to get a favorable vote has been in the works for some time, with the Hall Family Foundation offer being the latest piece of the strategy...

Time will tell, but regardless, it is interesting to see what individuals and companies will do to try to get what they or their leaders want.

This type of vote-getting is likely to happen with greater frequency in the coming months and years, with the average voter probably wondering whether his or her single vote is going to mean much in the face of such powerful, well-organized and well-orchestrated campaigns.

The Hall family and Hall Family Foundation has been extremely generous to KU for many years, but this is the first time foundation officials have used the possible acquisition of a building as a tool or bait to get voters to approve a tax hike.

KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway is a member of the foundation board.

Politics is a funny, sometimes dirty, raw business.
Lawrence Journal-World, on vote-getting strategies:

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Politics is a funny, sometimes dirty, raw business.
Despite icy weather conditions, students in the journalism program competed in the Kansas Scholastic Press Association regional contest on Feb. 21 at Wichita State University.

“I’m really glad that we kept going even though the weather was bad,” said senior Kirsten Zamarripa. “It allowed me to still compete and make it to state for the first time.”

Fourteen students from GBHS competed and six qualified for state in seven events.

“I think it was a challenge, but a great opportunity to show off your writing skills,” said junior Skylar McBride. “It helped when the critique sheets came back to know what I did wrong.”

The state qualifiers are Katie Goerl in editing, Kayla Simmons in yearbook sports writing, Kirsten Zamarripa in feature photography, Skylar McBride in yearbook copy writing, Melissa Rose in cutline writing and Haley Ellerman in advertising and editorial writing.

The students of Sherry Pruter, journalism adviser, will travel to the University of Kansas at Lawrence on May 2-3 to compete in the state competition.
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Beloit Physician Mentors KU Medical Student

Kansas City, Kan.- Martin Kienda, MD, a Beloit family physician, is hosting Casey Smith, a medical student from the University of Kansas School of Medicine, for four weeks (Feb. 25- March 22) as part of a community-based educational experience.

Kienda is a volunteer mentor, or preceptor, with KU School of Medicine’s Kansas Rural Preceptor Program. Since 1951, the program places all fourth-year medical students, around 175 each year, in communities across Kansas. The program helps introduce students to the practice of primary care in non-urban areas, to increase their awareness of professional opportunities in rural areas, and to give them the opportunity to use their diagnostic and clinical skills in real-life scenarios under the guidance of their preceptor mentors.

“These students gain valuable knowledge and skill in the field that they wouldn’t receive without this program- a program made possible by partnerships with doctors across Kansas,” said Barbara Atkinson, MD, executive vice chancellor of the University of Kansas Medical Center and executive dean of the KU School of Medicine.