

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Engineering dean chosen as provost

Nanotechnology scholar to start Aug. 16 pending trustees' approval

By **CHRISTINE DES GARENNES**
cgarenne@news-gazette.com

URBANA — The University of Illinois has chosen a noted nanotechnology scholar as its next provost.

Ilesanmi "Ade" Adesida, dean of the UI's College of Engineering, is expected to assume the post on Aug. 16, pending UI Board of Trustees approval.

UI Vice President and Chancellor Phyllis Wise announced the appointment Wednesday night.

"I'm honored and humbled to be selected as provost of this great campus. This is something I take very seriously," Adesida said. "I know how to work very hard and I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and get the job done."

Adesida will be paid \$430,000 annually.

The provost, who also is vice chancellor for academic affairs, reports directly to the vice president and chancellor and works in areas of budget planning and management, strategic planning and more. The provost is second in command on the campus; deans of the colleges, schools and the libraries report to the provost.

Wise praised Adesida's global experience, expertise in innovation, and leadership in public and private partnerships.

"He has an outstanding record of scholarship, a proven commitment to excellence, and an ability to successfully col-

laborate with colleagues at Illinois," she said in a release.

Adesida said he is looking forward to working with Wise, whom he called "a terrific administrator and a warm human being. It will be a pleasure to work with her."

"We have a new chancellor who ... is looking to the future, visioning excellence and asking where we will be in 20, 30, 40 years. That excites me. What can I do to help fulfill that vision? I want to see how we can advance this institution in service to the state, the nation and society," Adesida said.

Adesida edged out another internal finalist, Dean Ruth Watkins of the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Wise said both Adesida and Watkins have vast experience and connections on campus, and both understand the "critical importance" of having a comprehensive university with strong humanities, social sciences, arts and sciences.

But Adesida's expertise in the sciences was crucial, given the UI's strength in STEM areas — science, math, engineering and technology, Wise said.

"It is an area in which we want to invest in very strategic ways that will end up benefiting the whole campus," she said.

"I think it was probably one of the hardest choices I've ever made in my career," Wise told The News-Gazette. "Usually there's one outstanding candidate, and several excellent ones, and in this case I think there were two outstanding ones."

Born in Nigeria, Adesida has made the UI campus his home for 25 years. He earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in engineering from the University of California-Berkeley.

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PROVOST

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He was a professor at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Nigeria and Cornell University in New York before joining the UI faculty as a electrical and computer engineering professor in 1987.

A semiconductor and nanotechnology researcher, he joined the Coordinated Science Laboratory and Beckman Institute on campus. In 2005, he became director of the Micro and Nanotechnology Laboratory and served as interim dean of the College of Engineering from 2005 until 2006, when he was appointed dean.

Although he has been on campus for 25 years, Adesida said he plans to spend the next few months learning as much as he can about the campus, particularly in the humanities and social sciences areas.

He said he is looking forward to talking, listening and learning with faculty about their vision for excellence.

Because the provost is chief academic officer and chief budget officer, Adesida said one of his challenges is, "How do you align resources to match your ambitions?"

Adesida replaces Richard Wheeler, who has been in that position on an interim basis for over two years. He was appointed when then-interim Provost Robert Easter was asked to be interim chancellor following Richard Herman's resignation as chancellor.

Easter, a former dean of the UI College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, was acting as interim provost after Linda Katehi left to become chancellor at the University of California-Davis.

Wheeler did not apply for the job and has said he was still thinking about what his plans will be once the new provost is named.

The provost search began in mid-December with the establishment of the search committee and the position announcement. The university hired Parker Executive Search of Atlanta for \$90,000, plus expenses, to help with the search.

The third finalist was Adam Gamoran, director of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research and associate dean for research in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This was the first time the campus disclosed the names of the candidates for provost. In previous hirings of top campus administrators, the names of final candidates had been kept secret. All three spoke at public forums last month.

Trustees are expected to vote on Adesida's hiring at their next meeting, May 31, in Chicago.

*News-Gazette staff writer
Julie Wurth contributed
to this report.*

Health costs may rise for retired state workers

BY ALISSA GROENINGER
Tribune reporter

SPRINGFIELD — Retired state workers would have to pick up more of the costs of their health insurance under a contentious plan the Illinois House approved Wednesday.

The goal is to reduce the more than \$800 million a year that state government spends on a program that sees thousands of retirees now get coverage for little

or nothing.

Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan of Chicago and House Republican leader Tom Cross of Oswego implored colleagues to make the measure part of an effort to save billions of dollars by cutting health care for the poor, reforming public employee pensions and making trims to the state budget.

"The prescription on the table is huge," Madigan said. "This is one small part of it.

... If we can't do this, what in the world are we going to be able to do?"

Under the legislation, Gov. Pat Quinn's administration would set premiums for group health insurance programs for retired state workers, judges, lawmakers and university employees. The bill went to the Senate on a 74-43 vote.

Madigan said the upcoming decisions needed to close the budget gap are "not for the faint of heart."

The General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn for the spring May 31.

Cross sought to allay concerns by pointing to safeguards the Quinn administration plans. Retiree contributions for health care would be determined on a sliding scale and consider length of service and ability to pay.

The percentage of health care costs the retiree would pay also would be based on pension level, according to a

Quinn administration letter. Pension amounts would be broken into seven tiers. The higher the tier, the more the retiree would pay. The cost increase isn't expected to be as significant for retirees on Medicare, but no one is expected to pay less than he or she is paying now, the letter said.

Opponents of the measure contended the proposal would break the promises made to rank-and-file workers who retired under the

belief that their health care would be covered. But supporters countered that the program's cost is unaffordable given Quinn's call to cut state spending dramatically.

The program is expected to cost \$7,388 per participant, or \$876 million, in the budget year that starts July 1, a Cross aide said. Currently, 78,000 retirees pay no premium and 7,400 pay a portion of their premiums. In addition, 36,000 dependents are enrolled on a retiree's plan, but the premium does not cover the true cost of the health care benefit, the Cross aide said.

Madigan maintained that the state sometimes needs to be able to say no.

In other action, the Senate voted down a bill that would have provided a method for lawmakers to make recommendations of a joint House-Senate commission binding on matters of when state facilities should be closed or left open.

The move comes as Quinn seeks to close several prisons and social service sites around Illinois in a cost-saving move.

Illinois House backs ending free health insurance for retirees

Wed, 05/09/2012 - 3:16pm | The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — Longtime state employees would no longer be able get free health insurance when they retire under legislation approved by the Illinois House.

The vote is part of a push to cut pension benefits for government retirees. The governor, House speaker and other officials want to save money by cutting pensions, health care and other costs.

Right now, people who spend 20 years working for the state don't have to pay health insurance premiums in retirement.

The measure to end that benefit passed 74-43 Wednesday. It now goes to the state Senate.

Legislators called it a difficult move that must be made if Illinois is going to repair its budget.

Most area lawmakers voted against the bill, including Reps. Naomi Jakobsson, D-Urbana; Jason Barickman, R-Champaign; Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet; Adam Brown, R-Decatur; and Bill Mitchell, R-Forsyth.

Those voting yes included Reps. Chad Hays, R-Catlin, and Dan Brady, R-Bloomington.

The bill is SB1313.

Online

<http://www.ilga.gov/> ⁽¹⁾

Source URL: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/living/2012-05-09/illinois-house-backs-ending-free-health-insurance-retirees.html>

More like this, please

House votes to curb retirement perk

If you felt a tremor around 3 p.m. Wednesday, it most likely traveled from Springfield. The Illinois House voted 74-43 to end a generous retirement benefit for state and public university workers, General Assembly members and judges.

Sponsored by House Speaker Michael Madigan, the legislation would force about 78,000 retirees to pay more toward their health care costs. The state pays all the premiums for most retirees, costing taxpayers about \$800 million a year. Illinois can't afford that.

This bill is part of three legs of essential financial reform in the state: 1) Retiree health care costs, 2) Pension reform, 3)

Medicaid reform.

There's more that has to be done on spending, including Gov. Pat Quinn's call to close several expensive state institutions. A bid to block those closings was narrowly defeated Wednesday in the Senate.

But those are the big three, and the legislature has to deal with them now. Not after the November election. Now.

The extraordinarily generous health care benefits for retired employees must be scaled back. Under Madigan's bill, the state would allocate a certain amount of money toward retiree health insurance each year based on what the state can afford. Retirees

would pay the balance.

Madigan introduced this, in part, as a bargaining chip. Quinn's office is negotiating a new contract with the state's largest public employee union, and the bill may be Madigan's way of squeezing concessions at the negotiating table.

Fair enough. Illinois health benefits for retirees far outpace what most retirees get in the private sector and other states.

The House passed this by a fairly lopsided vote. But remember, this financial reform may be the easiest of the big three to accomplish. So when we see 43 "no" votes — including 18 Republicans — it makes us suspicious.

State Rep. Chapin Rose,

of Mahomet, remember what you told us when you ran in the Republican primary this year? "A solution must be found" for unsustainable health care costs, you wrote in our questionnaire. The solution came to a vote Wednesday. You voted "no."

Republican state Rep. Rosemary Mulligan, of Des Plaines, who voted against the bill, asked during debate how it would impact her own bottom line. She is retiring this year.

Our bottom line is this: Lawmakers, you created one unholy financial mess in this state. You know exactly what you have to do to fix it. Don't come home until you do.

Audit flunks college savings plan

College Illinois hit for conflicts, weak financial controls

By **ANDY GRIMM**
AND JODI S. COHEN
Tribune reporter

The underfunded College Illinois savings program was plagued by weak financial controls and conflicts of interest between top administrators and companies hired to invest

millions from the prepaid tuition fund, according to a report issued Wednesday by the state auditor general's office.

The report covers 2006 to 2011, a period when the commission that oversees the program approved a series of what some considered risky investments for the fund — including \$12.8 million that went to ShoreBank just two years before the bank collapsed.

Administrative costs for

the fund soared over the same period, even as sales of the prepaid tuition program plummeted and managers made overly optimistic estimates on investment returns, the report said.

The scathing review from Auditor General William G. Holland is just the latest in a string of reports that have detailed problems with the popular program, said state Rep. Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs.

"There have been red

flags and serious lapses," said Durkin, long a critic of the program's management. "Why these decisions were made, we needed to know."

Billed as a "worry-free way to pay for college," College Illinois allowed about 33,000 families to lock in tuition payments for 55,000 future students. But after audits showed massive shortfalls tied in part to

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State audit gives low marks to College Illinois

Continued from Page 1

declining sales and large tuition increases, applications for the program were cut off last year.

According to a spokesman, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, which oversees College Illinois, has changed its policies to prevent investments like the one in ShoreBank, and intends to follow all of the recommendations in the audit.

"All of that was in the past," spokesman John Samuels said of the problems described in the audit.

The audit is limited to the agency's prepaid tuition program and does not address ISAC's other functions, including its 529 colleges savings plan or state financial aid programs.

In the last year, Gov. Pat Quinn has replaced all 10 members of the commission's board and its director. The fund is now about 70.5 percent funded, up slightly from

Andrew Davis, former executive director of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, disputes the new state audit's findings.

67.6 percent in 2009 after the economic downturn began.

College Illinois will begin accepting new applicants "as soon as is practical," Samuels said.

The auditor general's report singled out former ISAC Execu-

tive Director Andrew Davis and portfolio manager George Egan for failing to disclose possible conflicts of interest and awarding contracts in violation of state procurement policies.

Davis on Wednesday said allegations of conflicts of interest are false, and that he had disclosed personal relationships.

Davis was appointed head of ISAC by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich in 2006, not long after his Chicago investment firm collapsed. He defended his tenure.

"The state of Illinois has enough rules that if someone goes looking, they will find something wrong," Davis said. "On substantive issues, you will find the investments were not only sound, but in some cases brilliant."

According to the report, Davis had worked with Joe Reynoso, chief executive officer of Reynoso Asset Management, before the firm received a \$20 million investment from College Illinois.

Davis also hired Nick O'Keefe, Reynoso's half-brother, as ISAC's deputy general counsel.

Davis said neither relationship influenced ISAC's investment decisions. He said he hired Reynoso as a runner on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange when Reynoso first graduated from college in the 1980s, and had last done business with him 25 years ago.

"I happened to know someone," Davis said. "Chicago is a small town. Anyone playing heads-up ball is going to know people. That is not a conflict. It is a witch hunt."

Also according to the report, Egan failed to disclose that while working as ISAC's portfolio manager, he invested \$500,000 with a hedge fund that received a \$55 million investment from College Illinois. After leaving his post at ISAC with a \$24,000 severance payment, Egan became a limited partner in a realty investment firm in which College Illinois had invested \$22 million, the report

said.

Davis defended Egan's investment with the hedge fund that did business with ISAC. "Contrary to being a conflict of interest, I think it is a sign of conviction and good faith when a person is willing to put their own money into the same pot they are selecting for taxpayer money," Davis said.

A spokesman for Holland's office said the report had been sent to the attorney general and office of the executive inspector general "for their consideration and potential follow-up."

Durkin said he has set up a College Illinois account for his daughter, now in fourth grade, and believes the program now is on sound footing.

Davis once had two College Illinois accounts for his children. He said Wednesday that he had canceled them.

agrimm@tribune.com
jscohen@tribune.com

COLLEGE ILLINOIS

Audit blasts program's ex-management

Several officials had undisclosed financial interests, report indicates

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — An Illinois college-tuition investment program was beset by shoddy management, including possible conflicts of interest by top officials, as it went underfunded and administrative costs tripled, according to an audit released Wednesday.

New managers of the College Illinois Prepaid Tuition Program who took over when Gov. Pat Quinn cleaned house last year were quick to embrace the findings by Auditor General William Holland and point out changes they've made to fix problems.

Holland referred some findings, including the undisclosed financial interests, to the state attorney general and the state's executive inspector general for further review.

The 15-year-old program allows families to buy contracts locking in future college costs — about 54,000 students are enrolled. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission hires fund managers to invest assets of \$1.3 billion. It stopped taking new applications last fall as management problems

came to light.

The audit found that the commission circumvented rules for hiring investors and instead engaged in a process "that lacked consistency, transparency, independence, documentation and compliance" with state law.

Former executive director Andrew Davis had previous working relationships with two firms that got money, and he sat on the evaluation team for choosing one that got \$20 million, according to the review. But he did not disclose the ties on ethics statements.

Portfolio manager George Egan invested \$500,000 in one company while serving on the review team that recommended hiring it, the audit found. Another company, whose selection auditors said was made outside the rules, made Egan a partner after he left the commission.

When Egan resigned from the commission in July 2010, Davis gave him a lump-sum payment of \$24,166, one of eight payouts to departing employees charged to College Illinois. Davis was put on paid administrative leave last summer before agreeing to step down with separation pay of \$98,000, which came from other funds.

"What we found, particularly in those areas of potential conflicts of interest, is very troubling," Holland said. "You have

people making personal investments with vendors who they were involved in selecting as the investment manager."

Egan defended himself in a telephone interview Wednesday evening, calling it "absurd" to see any conflict in investing his own money with a company handling money for College Illinois. That simply indicates he thought the investment was sound, he said.

"What better vote of confidence could there be?" Egan said.

A messages left at a phone number listed for Davis was not returned.

The audit looked at the program's operations from 2006 through June 2011. Lawmakers ordered the probe after Crain's Chicago Business reported the program's underfunding and questionable investments.

The audit called out the commission for granting one of the companies with ties to Davis \$10 million more than authorized and plowing \$14 million into a private equity firm that makes "luxury plug-in hybrid" vehicles despite investment risks outlined in paperwork.

During that period, annual administrative costs jumped from \$6.4 million to \$18.1 million in 2011 while the program's funding gap grew to \$500 million. The account is currently liable for more than \$1.8 billion

in future college costs, but had only about 70 percent of that on hand in 2011. That's slightly better than the previous two years but down from 93 percent as recently as 2007.

A statement released by commission executive director Eric Zarnikow and board chairwoman Kym Hubbard ticked off a list of changes made since the end of the period the audit covered. They include putting professional investors and government experts on an investment advisory panel, forming an audit committee, and studying investments and looking for better ones.

"While we can't change the past, be assured that the new Illinois Student Assistance Commission board and staff are hard at work implementing the changes necessary to stabilize and mend the program," the statement said.

Holland found examples where finances were pinned on unrealistic hopes. While the fund has averaged a 3.5 percent return on investments since 1998, commission predictions during the five-year period ranged from 7.5 percent to more than 9 percent. It regularly forecast at least 5,000 new contracts each year, but contract sales hit just under 5,000 in 2006 and steadily declined to 999 last year. Contract revenues cover only 7 percent of the program's costs.

The commission halted sales of new contracts in October and said Wednesday it is in the process of hiring a consultant for advice and wants to resume sales "as soon as practical."

Mayor defends pension proposal

Workers warned
of 'stark choices'
without changes

BY HAL DARDICK
Tribune reporter

Mayor Rahm Emanuel is defending his tough-medicine cure for ailing public pensions in missives sent Wednesday to the employees who would take a financial hit.

In letters and emails to all city employees, Emanuel explains the goal behind his proposal to boost employee pension contributions, raise retirement ages and suspend cost-of-living increases applied to retirement benefits.

"If we follow along the current path, we know we will confront two stark choices: Either the city's pension payments will squeeze its ability to offer the essential services that you provide, or each of our pension funds will go bankrupt, leaving you and your families without retirement security," Emanuel wrote.

The mayor announced he was sending out the "Dear City Employee" letters at a news conference following Wednesday's City Council meeting. It came a day after Emanuel made a rare mayoral trip to the state Capitol to outline his proposal to save faltering pension funds.

His solution, which also would involve implementing 401(k)-type plans for new employees, has been met with allegations of unfairness from unions representing city employees.

The unions say it's the failure of city and state leaders to set aside enough

money in retirement funds that led to a funding shortfall of \$20 billion in pensions supported mostly by city property taxes.

"I want everyone to know, the city employees have done nothing wrong," Emanuel said at the news conference.

The mayor also said taxpayers are not at fault, that the blame lies with legislative, union and city leaders who "year in and year out agreed to things that they knew we could not do and then didn't pay into the system like they were supposed to."

Without naming names, Emanuel said people who held his job and were in "other positions of leadership" created the current situation. The state has nearly \$80 billion in unfunded pension liabilities, the city \$20 billion.

Recent stories in a Tribune series on pension predicament explained how many aldermen benefit from enhanced pension funds endorsed by the administration of former Mayor Richard Daley that give them bigger benefits faster

than full-time rank-and-file employees. They also explained how Daley took advantage of arcane pension laws to boost his pension.

"I don't think people in a position of responsibility should do anything special for themselves," Emanuel said.

Jacquelyn Heard, a spokeswoman for Daley, de-

fended the former mayor.

"Daley spent nearly 40 years in public service," Heard wrote. "He is now receiving the pension that he is eligible for under the law. ... He could have retired more than a decade ago and begun collecting his pension then.

"Instead, he chose to remain in public service, continuing to build Chicago into a world-class city, for 15 years beyond his pension eligibility date."

Emanuel also specifically defended his proposal for a 10-year "pause" on cost-of-living increases that in many cases have led to pension check boosts that far outpaced the rate of inflation.

"Given the scope of the problem, if you don't deal with today's retirees in some way, you're actually not going to deal with the problem," he said.

hdardick@tribune.com

ACT abuse

As a college professor, I was incensed by the story highlighting the abuse in the ACT system. For so many students to have increased time and accommodation on the ACT is a travesty of justice. It is particularly strange that so many of these students live in affluent areas where medical opinions regarding learning disabilities are easy to buy.

The fact that these students are allowed these accommodations on the ACT adversely affects and seriously hinders the chances of minority students' acceptance into state schools. It is time the General Assembly as well as the educational community look into this and put an end to these bought-and-sold accommodations.

— Ken Gaines, Chicago

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ACT

SFGate.com

Article

SFGate.com

CSU presidents' big raises to be paid by foundation

Nanette Asimov

Thursday, May 10, 2012

A new campus president at California State University can be paid 10 percent more than the outgoing president, but the raise has to come from non-public foundation funds, CSU trustees voted Wednesday.

The decision comes as six of the 23 campuses prepare to change hands, with two new presidents to be named Thursday at San Francisco State and Cal State San Bernardino.

Meeting in Long Beach, the trustees heard criticism from students and staff about providing any executive raises - regardless of the source - and about issues from low student representation on the board, to skyrocketing tuition and fees. The price for a year of undergraduate education rises again this fall, by 9 percent to \$7,017.

Among those who spoke were four students who said they've been on a hunger strike for eight days to protest conditions at CSU.

"Our bodies are tired and our spirits are strong," said Natalie Dorado, an economics major at Cal State San Bernardino who is among 11 hunger strikers, including an 18-year-old woman that students said had been hospitalized. Dorado listed their demands: "a five-year moratorium on fee increases, the elimination of campus presidents' car and housing allowances, and reverting administrative salaries to 1999 levels."

None of those is likely.

The new policy on presidential pay is the trustees' attempt to stop a barrage of criticism about runaway salaries for six other presidents, hired between December 2010 and March as budget cuts, course reductions and rising tuition continue unabated.

The trustees first adopted a presidential pay policy in January, capping raises at 10 percent. When that didn't stop the sharp-tongued queries from politicians about why the current salaries of \$259,000 to \$400,000 were insufficient, the trustees tweaked the policy to say raises had to come from private sources.

"The foundations will have to go out and raise discretionary funds for this purpose," said Chancellor Charles Reed, noting that money earmarked for other purposes won't be used.

Each campus has at least one foundation, which typically raises private funds for scholarships and campus events.

Trustee Steven Glazer called the change "very constructive," and said no foundation has to supply the extra cash.

Only trustee Margaret Fortune voted against it, but she didn't say why.

State Sens. Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, and Ted Lieu, D-Torrance (Los Angeles County), have criticized CSU's pay practices. They also objected to the new policy on grounds that foundations should help students, not executives.

Another critic, Gov. Jerry Brown, had urged the trustees last summer to cultivate presidents from within CSU because outsiders tend to be more expensive.

CSU spokesman Mike Uhlenkamp said the trustees are considering creating a "Presidential Development Program" for promising employees.

Currently, three CSU presidents and Chancellor Reed receive extra pay from foundations.

Reed's salary is \$451,500, including \$30,000 from the CSU Foundation.

At San Jose State, President Mohammad Qayoumi was hired last year at nearly 8 percent more than his predecessor: \$353,200, including \$25,000 from the foundation. Qayoumi came from Cal State East Bay.

At San Luis Obispo, President Jeff Armstrong was hired in 2010 from Michigan State at nearly 16 percent higher than his predecessor: \$380,000, including \$30,000 from the foundation. The deal prompted an unsuccessful lawsuit from the faculty union, which is being offered a no-raise contract.

But it was the salary for Elliot Hirshman, hired from the University of Maryland last July to head San Diego State, that inspired the backlash against pay hikes. The trustees gave Hirshman nearly 34 percent more than his predecessor: \$400,000, including \$50,000 from the foundation. They did it on the same day they raised tuition by 12 percent.

Kentucky.com

University of Kentucky trustees approve 6 percent tuition increase

By Linda B. Blackford — lblackford@herald-leader.com

Posted: 1:16pm on May 8, 2012; Modified: 6:08am on May 9, 2012

The University of Kentucky Board of Trustees approved a 6 percent tuition increase for the upcoming academic year on Tuesday, bringing the total cost of tuition, fees and housing for in-state undergraduates to \$16,518 a year.

The increase got push-back from some trustees, who said they worry about the long-term escalation of tuition costs and its effects on Kentucky families. In the past 10 years, UK tuition has increased 147 percent.

According to a recent study by the University of Virginia, UK's in-state tuition now is more than in-state tuition at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Texas at Austin.

"I'm very, very troubled knowing the vote I am making would have kept me from going to school," said trustee Pam May, who urged UK administrators to keep looking for more ways to cut costs.

Trustee Jo Hern Curris pointed out that while the Council on Postsecondary Education allowed UK to raise tuition up to 6 percent, it wasn't required to do so.

"I'm very concerned about the average family in Kentucky and what this means to the average family," Curris said.

She said that after this year, she no longer could support 6 percent increases and that she was pleased to see that a 3 percent tuition increase is being proposed for 2013-14.

UK officials have said repeatedly that declines in state support and other costs make tuition increases unavoidable. During the next two years, UK is facing a \$20 million loss in state aid, and a \$23 million increase in fixed costs such as insurance and utilities.

Officials are working on a budget that will be presented to the board next month. Under the proposal, administrative units that report directly to the president would have to cut spending 11.4 percent during the next two years, while academic units would face 7.5 percent cuts.

Faculty and staff would not get a raise in 2012-13 but would share a 5 percent merit pool the next year.

In fall 2011, 91 percent of UK's 13,186 undergraduates received some kind of financial aid, said Angie Martin, UK's vice president of finance. That aid paid for \$3,468 of the average student's \$4,558 bill for tuition and fees per semester. That aid did not include housing, dining, books or other expenses.

UK has increased its scholarships from 18 percent of all student aid received by students in 2006 to 33 percent in 2011. That's compared to a downturn in state aid: In 2006, state financial aid made up 41 percent of aid to UK students; now it's down to 27 percent.

Trustees disagreed about the effect of tuition increases on students.

"I don't see any super burden on individuals," said Jim Stuckert, a past chairman and CEO of Hilliard Lyons, a wealth-management firm.

Trustee Sheila Brothers referenced an earlier presentation on Owsley County, one of the five poorest counties in the nation.

"I might add that folks in Owsley County might have a different perspective on this," she said.

May also questioned a chart presented by Martin that showed 47 percent of UK students have student loans with an average debt load of \$23,500. Then Martin showed a chart that said a graduate in the United States with a \$55,700 salary could pay off that debt in two years.

"I suspect very few people will start by getting \$55,000 in Kentucky's environment," May said. "I don't want to rely too much on it. It might be misleading that it's so easy to pay this money back."

Faculty trustees Irina Voro and John Wilson abstained from the vote.

Wilson said he abstained because he's concerned about the effects of tuition increases on more expensive graduate degrees. In addition, he is worried about upcoming budget cuts.

"I would have rather considered all these factors together," Wilson said. "I really hate to commit to this when we don't know what the effects of cuts on the academic units will be."

Student trustee Micah Fielden said he supported the increase because he thinks anything less would lead to fewer teachers and fewer classes.

"Over the long term, we'll be creating an environment that is more affordable for our students," Fielden said. "A 6 percent increase is manageable when you look at what could be the cost of another year or another semester."

After the meeting, President Eli Capilouto said the increase would be balanced with cuts within the institution.

"We're going to do our best to make sure we become as efficient as possible without cutting essential services to students," he said.

In other business, the board's new athletics committee held its first meeting since the dissolution of the UK Athletics Association. The members did not take any action but heard about many positive activities in that division.

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Published on *The Connecticut Mirror* (<http://www.ctmirror.org>)

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Lawmakers to colleges: no more semesters of remediation

Jacqueline Rabe Thomas

May 9, 2012

A quarter of the students who enter a public college in Connecticut spend their first year taking only non-credit remedial courses. Some even spend two years.

That may soon end, with the legislature overwhelmingly approving a bill that will, starting in the fall of 2014, restrict the circumstances that college officials can, and cannot, require students to spend time and money taking these courses.

"As we slow them down, they are less likely to graduate," said Sen. Beth Bye, D-West Hartford, co-chairwoman of the Higher Education Committee.

Bye and many other legislators have referred to these remedial courses as the colleges' Bermuda Triangle: Just 13.6 percent of the full-time students who take them actually earn an associate's degree in four years, twice the time it should take, reports the Board of Regents.

"That status quo is not working. There is a fundamental problem... It needs to change," said Mike Meotti, a top official at the state's Board of Regents for Higher Education, whose colleges enroll 15,000 new students a year.

The approved bill will limit remedial enrollment to one semester and requires more than a standardized entrance exam to determine who must take these non-credit courses. The test that many community colleges currently use was criticized in a recent report by researchers at Columbia University's Teachers College.

"Placement tests do not yield strong predictions of how students will perform in college," the report reads.

Professors at public universities have tried to kill the bill.

"We are not on board with this," said Ellen Benson, an official for Connecticut State Universities' faculty union. Professors sent legislators a wave of emails outlining their concerns that restricting remedial education enrollment could land many students in courses they are not equipped to take.

"It sets students up for failure," said Benson about the original proposal that would have eliminated all remedial courses. Faculty members still have significant concerns, she said, including how soon the changes will go into effect.

But faculty concerns weren't enough to sway legislators. Just 15 of the 189 state representatives and senators voted against the bill. A spokesman for Gov. Dannel P. Malloy was unsure if the governor plans to sign the bill.

Before the vote in the House late Friday, Rep. Mary M. Mushinsky, D-Wallingford, said she plans to support the bill because, "Remedial coursework is too much a barrier to earning a degree."

And this barrier disproportionately affects black and Hispanic students, reports Complete College, a national nonprofit organization funded by the Gates Foundation and others. Seventy-two percent of black freshman are sent to remediation compared with 56 percent of white students, the organization reports. Graduation rates are similarly uneven.

Rep. Jason Rojas, who represents East Hartford, Glastonbury and Manchester, voted against the bill. He said he knows that remediation is a huge problem, but he pointed to Board of Regents' figures showing that 70 percent of the students who enroll in community colleges have not been adequately prepared in high school, and need remedial courses.

"But I'm not convinced that this new system will solve the problem. It was kind of like trying to fit a square into a round hole and expecting it to work," he said. "The colleges have received significant cuts. I am not sure they can handle this new program."

The 100,000-student college system has had its state funding cut by nearly \$30 million this year.

But Bye isn't buying that argument.

"There are community colleges in the state who are making money on these courses. They need to figure something else out," she said, noting that she suspects the pushback is because significantly less faculty will be needed. "What we've done with this bill is we've drawn a line in the sand. We had to say to them, 'Look we're the parents here. No more of this.'"

The approved state budget provides no funding for this initiative which, in addition to a new evaluation system, also requires that entry-level courses for credit have significant help for students who would have previously been routed to remedial classes.

Meotti, the colleges' executive vice president, said that doesn't worry him. The cost to the state to have these remedial courses is steep: \$84 million a year, according to the New England Board of Higher Education.

"The savings from this reorganization will help," he said. "The bottom line is we will have funding."

Bye said she suspects that only a small fraction of those who are sent to remediation now actually need it.

"I have heard stories of people spending two or three years in remediation. Something needed to change," she said. "This will do that."

Education

Source URL: <http://www.ctmirror.org/story/16302/lawmakers-colleges-no-more-semesters-remediation>

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Groups Team Up to Turn Free Online Courses Into Cheap College Credit

May 9, 2012, 12:01 am

By Nick DeSantis



The Saylor Foundation has been building an online catalog of free, self-paced college courses since 2010. But students who completed those courses could not typically earn credit toward a degree, since the nonprofit group is not an accredited institution. Saylor's new partnership with the online course-provider StraighterLine seeks to change that, giving students an inexpensive way to earn academic credit using freely available materials.

The collaboration, announced today, will give students two different ways to save money when pursuing academic credit. Beginning in the fall, students can study free courses on Saylor.org and then enroll at StraighterLine to take an exam. After passing, they will receive American Council on Education recommended credit. Students could also enroll in a StraighterLine program, using Saylor's free course materials as they go along.

Alana Harrington, director of the Saylor Foundation, said her group's repository of free online courses won't go anywhere, and will still grant certificates of completion. But the partnership with StraighterLine will give students a way to get credit for low-cost online courses that's more meaningful than a certificate.

"We understand the fact that to some students, the pure acquisition of knowledge or the certificate proving their competency isn't enough," she said. "Credit is a form of currency today." The two groups have not yet decided which Saylor courses students can take for credit through the new program.

StraighterLine and the Saylor Foundation will also team up with George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College to offer students an easier method of transferring credits between the institutions.

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