Kansas needs more math, science teachers

As the Kansas economy becomes increasingly global and highly competitive, we must prepare the children of Kansas with the training they need for the economy of the future.

Key to Kansas' ability to succeed in the new technology-driven marketplace will be workers who excel in math, science, technology and engineering; and right now, our students are underperforming compared to their peers around the world. Encouraging more students to focus on these fields and continue their education in math and science will help to ensure that we have the workforce for a prosperous future.

Quality teachers are essential to the success of our students; however, Kansas faces a shortage of math and science teachers. The Kansas State Department of Education recently reported that next year Kansas schools are likely to have over 680 vacancies for math and science teachers, but only 228 new math and science teachers are expected to graduate from Kansas schools.

Teachers have always had significant impact on the lives of their students, but now more so than ever, teachers dictate the future success of our economy as well.

Given the importance of these educators, it is essential the state produce not just more math and science teachers, but more effective math and science teachers. We can do this by encouraging math and science majors to enter the teaching profession and by supporting the development of highly qualified teachers in math and science fields. A new program at the University of Kansas will accomplish those goals.

UKanTeach is an innovative
new program that allows students to earn degrees in math or science as well as a teaching license. The program, a collaboration between the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Education, aims to double the number of math and science teachers graduating from KU each year, resulting in an additional 50 new teachers in Kansas classrooms.

Last week the University of Kansas was one of 12 universities nationwide to receive a National Math and Science Initiative grant. The $2.4 million grant funded by the ExxonMobil Corporation will be used to fund the UKanTeach program. We know it works, because this program has been in place at the University of Texas and the results are encouraging.

We are pleased that KU was able to secure one of these competitive grants, and I am confident the UKanTeach program will produce more of the teachers our state needs to help our students thrive in the subjects of math and science. With programs like this and a continued focus on math and science, success in the classroom will no doubt extend to economic success in the future.
Grant aims to reduce looming shortage of math, science teachers

LAWRENCE (AP) — University of Kansas officials hope that a new $2.4 million federal grant will help them reduce the shortage of math and science teachers in Kansas.

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It will allow students to earn a science or math degree and a teaching license in four years.

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The Kansas program is patterned after a similar program at the University of Texas, which has produced about 70 math and science teachers each year.

Funds for the program were awarded Friday by the National Math and Science Initiative, one of 10 awards to universities to replicate the Texas program. The grant includes $1 million that will be awarded only if Kansas can obtain matching funds from private sources.

UKanTeach has been endorsed by the Kansas Board of Regents, which plans to ask legislators for funds to support the program.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who attended the presentation Friday in Topeka, said the grant has implications for the future.

"Math and science education is key to Kansas' ability to succeed in the global economy," Sebelius said in a written statement.

"UKanTeach is an innovative program that will produce the teachers our state needs to help our students thrive in these subjects."

Janis Lariviere, wife of university Provost Richard Lariviere, is familiar with the program after the couple's years at Texas. She said Kansas has historically exported teachers and that the shortage problem has emerged in the past decade.

"This program is designed to be completed in a typical four-year time frame," Lariviere said.

However, math and science majors could complete their teaching requirements in two years, if they enter the program as a junior or senior.

Lariviere said 80 percent of the graduates of the Texas program were still teaching after five years.

The overall retention rate for teachers is less than 50 percent after five years, said Joe Heppert, chairman of the University of Kansas chemistry department and a co-director of the UKanTeach program. Interest in the Kansas program is growing because students can test the waters before committing to completing all the required course.

"Everyone involved has been a little overwhelmed by the number of interested students," he said.

Participation is limited to math and science students, but Heppert said it could be expanded to include foreign language students in the future.

One of the first participants, Larry Hollingsworth, is using the program to move from the corporate world to the classroom.

He will graduate in two years as a teacher with a degree in biology. He's spending this semester at a Lawrence elementary school teaching math and science.

"I have had plenty of experiencing teaching in the past, but I've picked up a lot of new information through this program," he said.

"This program has really added to my teaching skills."
Powell: Coal plant emissions aid crops

BY SARAH KESSINGER
HARRIS NEWS SERVICE

TOPEKA — Garden City Rep. Larry Powell sent a letter to newspapers this week touting the benefits that carbon dioxide from coal-fired power plants would have on crops in western Kansas.

The Republican lawmaker wrote the letter in protest of state Health and Environment Secretary Rod Bremby’s recent rejection of a permit for a coal-fired power plant near Powell’s district.

Powell also questions the science behind the now-common reports that the planet is warming because of an atmospheric overload of carbon dioxide, primarily from coal-burning power plants and automobiles.

“One of the really good things about CO2 is that plants perform better under stress (drought, etc.) with increased levels of CO2,” Powell wrote.

Johannes Feddema, a professor in the University of Kansas’ Department of Geography, said the letter overlooks the broader issue of global warming.

“The largest point to me is that picking and choosing what’s ‘good’ and what’s ‘bad’ misses the point that any great rate of change in our climate or atmospheric chemistry is going to be a challenge for our large human population that is entirely dependent on mass production of food and goods,” Feddema said.

Higher carbon dioxide levels may have some fertilizing effects on crops, he said, but that wouldn’t make much of a difference if drought, for example, were occurring.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; which includes a wide array of researchers including some Kansas scientists, has created models of future climate amid global warming. The models show potential long-term drought in water-short parts of Kansas and other western states.

Powell said Thursday that he dismisses the panel’s findings and doesn’t believe manmade climate change is occurring.

“A consensus of scientists is not scientific proof. If it’s actually true, they’d all agree with that.”

Powell said citations in his letter to newspapers this week came from a book written by brothers Keith and Craig Idso.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, D.C., the Idso brothers have done work in the past for Western Fuels Association.

The association, which actively promotes skepticism of global warming research, is a cooperative of coal-fired utilities that includes Hays-based Sunflower Electric Corp., which seeks to build the two plants in Finney County.

Sunflower’s Chief Executive Officer Earl Watkins is a Western Fuels board member.

“I got the book in the mail and I went through it, and it had things I’d not heard before,” Powell said.

The book, “Forecasting World Food Supplies: The Impact of Rising Atmospheric CO2 Concentrations,” concludes that carbon dioxide should boost agricultural production by 50 percent over the next 50 years, he said.

In his letter, Powell said he’d been looking to learn just what effects more carbon dioxide would have on crops.

Joy Ward, an assistant professor of plant ecology at the University of Kansas, said it’s admirable that Powell seeks answers on the topic.

Through her research of carbon dioxide and crops, she and other scientists find that global warming is causing significant change, some quite detrimental to agriculture.

By fumigating field sites with higher levels of carbon dioxide, they’ve learned that when conditions are good, crop production improves. But carbon dioxide is also causing temperatures to rise, which is a problem for plant life.

“In the background is a very negative problem,” Ward said. “You have to separate the direct effects, which are positive, from the indirect effects.”

It’s causing weather extremes, she noted, more rainfall in some places and less in others, more severe hurricanes, tornadoes and droughts.
Selecting the court

A University of Kansas law professor revisited concerns about how state Supreme Court justices are selected in Kansas this past week.

Stephen J. Ware argued that citizens would be better served if the state required high court justices to be confirmed by the state Senate before taking the bench.

The Federalist Society, a conservative legal group, also commissioned a poll that showed public support among Kansans for such a change.

Legislators have failed to amend the change into the Constitution the past two sessions.

Currently a nine-member nominating commission evaluates candidates for the court and selects three individuals for the governor to choose from. But Ware said that process gives too much power to attorneys, who are guaranteed five spots on the nominating panel.

However Linda S. Parks, a Wichita attorney and president of the Kansas Bar Association, said Ware’s proposal would make the selection process even more political.

“He wants the politicians to control it instead of the people and I think that’s absolutely the kind of system that Kansans don’t want.”
Summit airs concerns of teacher retention

BY SARAH KESSINGER
HARRIS NEWS SERVICE

TOPEKA — Many Kansas school districts must spend a growing share of their budgets sending recruiters outside the state and sometimes even outside the country to find new teachers, a panel of educators noted Friday.

Annual vacancies — in math, science, special education as well as other areas — call for a greater focus from leaders and better teacher pay, they said at a summit on the state's expanding teacher shortage.

"They're leaving for money, folks," said Mike Lane, Emporia State University president. "That's the single biggest reason."

About 300 Kansas school administrators and state education officials met for the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Summit to assess what some are terming a crisis.

Lane suggested more recruiting begin in public schools. Students often judge by their classroom experiences whether they'd like to go into teaching as a profession.

"If we're not doing the job there, there's very little my faculty can do to recruit them into the field later," he said.

University of Kansas Dean of Education Rick Ginsberg said the state's schools lose most teachers in early career years and late in careers.

Payment is part of the issue, he said, as young people enter the profession but are lured away by higher-paying jobs. Working conditions, too, play a major role in retention.

As for long-term teachers, they can retire at a relatively young age, he said, and they often will once they've hit the maximum level on the salary schedule.

The state faces a major chal-
length in five years when 36 percent of its teacher workforce is due to reach retirement age.

"We're going to have exacerbated problems and bigger crises than we ever imagined," Ginsberg said.

He suggested mounting a comprehensive, well-researched approach to recruitment, retention, teacher certification issues and teacher preparation.

Solutions, he and others said, need to result in better pay, including consideration of pay based on performance quality; recruitment targeted at states with an oversupply of teachers — such as Michigan and Indiana; strengthening of programs that encourage high schools to channel students into local community colleges or other universities; and establishment of a statewide recruitment center.

"We also need to take a good look at the regulations we have and knock down any barriers to getting good quality people into the classroom," Ginsberg said of licensing requirements to teach in Kansas.

He cited a survey done at KU a few years ago in which some high-achieving students were asked why they didn't plan to pursue a teaching degree.

Their reply: "Because we see what our teachers have to do."

Susan Scherling, superintendent in Stanton County schools, said her far-southwest Kansas district struggles to recruit to such a remote area. But she thinks the $33,000 starting salary is competitive for the small district of 467 students.

While the district offers teachers small class sizes, the response she often hears from recruits is "you are so far from everything" or "you are so far from anything."
Grant aims to reduce shortage of teachers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Letter of the law disputed

Wisconsin badgers Washburn over the use of its ‘W’ logo

By Barbara Hollingsworth
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Kindergartners might just call it the letter W.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison calls it the "Motion W." And the school contends in a lawsuit filed last week in federal court that the Motion W looks a whole lot like the W used by Washburn University.

"Washburn is making use of both identical and confusingly similar variations of the Motion W mark, in a blatant attempt to trade on the goodwill of Wisconsin," the suit says.

What? asked Washburn officials.

"The W looks pretty much like any other W," Amanda Millard, assistant director of university relations at Washburn, said Tuesday. "They use red, and we use blue.

"We’re two totally different schools," she said. "We’re not anywhere near each other. It's two different Ws."

UW-Madison and other schools have been known to wrangle with schools that attempt to use their logos — or something similar. Last year, an Iowa high school was forced to give up its W. And locally, it took negotiations before The University of Kansas could come to an agreement with Kutztown University in Pennsylvania over the letters KU.

In the end, Kutztown agreed to only use KU only when combined with the words Kutztown or Kutztown University, said Todd Cohen, director of university relations at The University of Kansas.

"For KU and Kutztown, it fortunately was handled very amicably," Cohen wrote in an e-mail. "We were able to come to agreement without having a fisticuff over a font."

But the desire to protect one's turf — or in this case trademark — is understandable, he said.

"In this day and age, you are trying to protect your brand identity," Cohen said.

UW-Madison, whose sports teams are nicknamed the Badgers, has never taken another school to court over such a matter.

"It’s unfortunate and certainly regrettable from our perspective," said Casey Nagy, an assistant to UW-Madison chancellor John Wiley. "We really haven’t had this kind of situation develop with a college or university."

Athletic teams at UW-Madison have

Please see LETTER, Page 6A

Letter: At least for now, Washburn will still use ‘W’ on its uniforms

Continued from Page 1A

used the Motion W since 1990. Washburn’s teams have used their W since the mid-1990s and made changes in recent years in response to badgering from UW-Madison.

The lawsuit accuses Washburn of "willfully, intentionally and maliciously" using the Motion W logo to deceive consumers and cause confusion.

The university is seeking an injunction barring Washburn from using the Motion W mark or any trademark similar to Wisconsin’s and demands that Washburn recall and destroy any infringing products. It also seeks compensation for profits Washburn earned on its logo, as well as punitive damages.

Washburn isn’t rushing to drop its W just yet. University uniforms will still use the W — at least for now.

"We’re going to continue to use it until or unless we’re ordered by the court to do otherwise," said Washburn spokeswoman Dena Anson.

The Associated Press and Capital-Journal staff writer Ken Corbitt contributed to this report.

Barbara Hollingsworth can be reached at (785) 295-1285 or barbara.hollingsworth@cjonline.com.
You can volunteer and read the paper

There are almost 13,000 blind individuals in Kansas. These folks can't see the sunrise or the softness of the first snowfall. This population can't read the morning newspaper with that first cup of coffee.

They must rely on their other senses to "see" their world. The way they access the daily paper is through programs like KU Audio Reader based in Lawrence, Kansas.

KU Audio Reader is a closed circuit radio service for anyone who has a problem reading standard print materials.

Audio Reader airs more than 160 hours weekly of printed matter and special information to thousands of listeners in the state of Kansas and western Missouri.

How does Audio Reader accomplish this? They rely on the generosity of volunteers with good voices and a willingness to read.

Recently, KU Audio Reader and Alphapointe Association for the Blind partnered to establish a local studio where volunteers can read the daily newspapers. This means that volunteers don't have to travel to Lawrence in order to participate as a reader.

Volunteers are asked to read various newspapers from the Kansas City Metro area for two hours a week. Volunteers will work in teams of two to read these local papers. The readings are then broadcast over the Audio Reader network.

All volunteers must audition to be a reader. The audition includes a 100 word pronunciation test. In addition there is a 15 minute reading test where the prospective volunteer reads excerpts from newspapers and books.

The qualities that are looked for in a reader are good pronunciation skills and clear, distinct, understandable diction. There are two audition dates scheduled for this project in the Kansas City area. Auditions will be between 10 am and 3:30 pm on Tuesday, December 11, and Friday, December 14. They will be held at Alphapointe at 7501 Prospect, Kansas City, Missouri. To schedule an audition or to find out more information call Lori at 1-800-772-8898 or email her at LHK@ku.edu.

For information about other volunteer opportunities, please contact me at 913-371-3674 or check out our web site at www.unitedway-wyco.org.

Diane Hentges is the Director of the Volunteer at the United Way of Wyandotte County.
Local students join awards presentations

Ellen Stolle, Prairie Village, senior in biochemistry and genetics, biology and Spanish at the University of Kansas, and a graduate of Shawnee Mission East High School, joined the award presentation to honor two faculty members receiving the Honor for an Outstanding Progressive Educator Award at KU.

Craig Martin, professor and chair of ecology and evolutionary biology, and Edward McBride, lecturer in civil, environmental and architectural engineering, received the awards.

Established by the Class of 1959, the award is the only honor given exclusively by KU students for teaching excellence. For the second time in 48 years the award went to two faculty members.
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