Dental Board Repeals Rule On Testing Issue

By JOHN HANNA
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) -- A state regulatory board repealed a rule Friday that threatened to deny licenses to most of the prospective Kansas dentists in this year's graduating class at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

The Kansas Dental Board's plan to reconsider a policy imposed only six months ago touched off a debate over whether repealing the rule would endanger public health. The policy dealt with the scores a prospective dentist must receive on one of two professional exams.

University faculty and students appealed to the board after 19 of the 32 graduating students who had hoped to obtain a Kansas license failed to meet the new standard. They urged the board to return to its previous standards, saying it already was strong enough.

UMKC is an important source of prospective dentists for Kansas because the state doesn't operate its own dental school.

The board's decision was unanimous. Members said they had not fully understood the differences between the two exams when they established the new policy in November.

"It's pretty clear that we made a mistake," said board President Richard Darnall, a Topeka oral surgeon. "On the board's decision to repeal the rule, he added: "It isn't going to have an effect on the quality of dentists licensed here."

Some of the students attended the board's meeting and were pleased that it cleared the way for them to be licensed. Steven Vodonicke plans to practice in Shawnee.

"I feel I'm a very competent dentist," he said.

But before the board's vote, the Central Regional Dental Testing Service suggested that repealing the rule could create "immeasurable pain" for patients.

Central Regional is a Topeka-based nonprofit group that administers an exam for prospective dentists, who must score 75 on each section to pass.

Kansas also had licensed dentists who had passed an exam administered by the Western Regional Examining Board, based in Phoenix, in which a passing score is 55 on each section.

More than 30 states accept results from multiple tests, though some apply restrictions if a prospective dentist has taken the Western Regional exam.

And in November, the Kansas board said students taking the Western Regional exam also had to score a 75 on each section.

George Kinney, a past president of Central Regional, said it has a longer history of testing a prospective dentist's skills at diagnosing a patient's potential problem.

"It's of little import if we've done the wrong procedure on a patient if we've done it well," he said.

But critics of the new rule said the two tests are different, meaning a 75 score on one isn't the equivalent of a 75 score on the other.

"In the meantime, you're screwing over, to use a phrase, people who don't deserve it," said Michael Reed, the dean of UMKC's School of Dentistry. He called any suggestion that his university was putting Kansas patients at risk "nonsense" and "political buffoonery."

And Dan Minnis, a Pittsburg dentist who teaches at UMKC, blamed Central Regional for using "scare tactics" to defend the November policy.

"They want to be the monopoly in testing for our students across the country," Minnis said.

Kinney acknowledged that a statement issued by Central Regional before the board's vote may have "embellished a little bit" on the potential dangers of reversing the rule, and he said UMKC is providing a fine education.

But he said the higher standard would do more to make sure that new dentists are proficient in their skills.
KU grads from Ellinwood

The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring - representing 95 Kansas counties, 48 other states and the District of Columbia and 44 other countries - have been announced by the University Registrar.

Those from Ellinwood include: Andrea Nicole Macy, daughter of Marla Macy, with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing; Christopher Robl, son of Craig Robl, with a Bachelor of Science in Education; Mary Tudor, with a Master in Social Work; and Tyler Douglas Young, with a Master of Arts/Political Science.
TOPEKA — The Kansas Board of Regents has approved a policy allowing criminal background checks for job applicants at the state's six universities.

The new policy is being adopted after the discovery of several convicted felons working in a department at the University of Kansas.

The policy adopted Wednesday makes exceptions for student and temporary workers, but all other new employees are subject to criminal background checks. That includes a review of the sex offender registry.

KU Provost Richard Lariviere was a dean at University of Texas-Austin when a similar system was launched. He says some faculty members and administrators complained when it was implemented, but the policy did not interfere with recruiting.
STATE'S UNIVERSITIES SEEK TO RAISE TUITION UP TO 8.7 PERCENT

The Associated Press

TOPEKA — Tuition would increase this fall by as much as 8.7 percent at the state's six universities under proposals their top officials outlined Thursday.

The changes would raise at least $22 million during the next academic year, and officials told the Kansas Board of Regents that their universities need the new dollars to provide adequate pay raises and sustain existing programs. The board, which oversees the state's higher education system, plans to vote on the proposals next month.

The largest percentage increases would be in the tuition charged to some incoming freshmen at the University of Kansas and to some juniors and seniors at Kansas State University. But some students at both institutions would see no increase in what they pay.

Officials at Emporia State University didn't have final figures, but students there are likely to see increases of between 4.9 percent and 6 percent.

University of Kansas officials asked the regents to continue a program under which incoming freshmen are guaranteed the same tuition for four years. Kansas State proposed, for the first time, charging juniors and seniors more than it charges freshmen and sophomores.

The board wasn't entirely pleased with the proposals. The regents strongly suggested in February that the universities seek increases of 4 percent or less, and a few of the changes suggested went beyond that mark.

"For six years now, we have had huge tuition increases," former Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, a regent from Overland Park, said during a break. "In this economy, my personal belief is that you do not want to start shutting the doors of your universities based on ability to pay."

Some of the proposals remained fluid. Officials at four universities — Emporia State, Fort Hays State, Kansas State and Wichita State — said they would have to revise their plans to include larger increases. They blamed the Legislature's decision to appropriate $10 million less for their operating budgets than Gov. Kathleen Sebelius had proposed.

Several regents, including Sherrer, expressed frustration with the universities' criticism of legislators.

Regent Donna Shank, of Liberal, suggested that universities consider trimming their spending.

"We are in a tough economy right now," she said. "Everyone is having to cut back right now. Do we put all that burden on the backs of the students?"

Adam McGonigle, student body president at the University of Kansas, said it's important to keep tuition under control. But he acknowledged that students expect to see modest increases.

"The cost of living goes up every year," he said. "The cost of an education goes up as well."

The largest increases at the University of Kansas are driven by its "compact" program, in which the university sets a single tuition rate for incoming freshmen for four years. The program started last year, and university officials pitched it as protection for families against large tuition increases.

Calculating the rate each year is complicated because the university attempts to cover some potential increases in its costs.

The rate charged to incoming freshmen who participate in the fall will be 8.6 percent or 8.7 percent higher than the rate for those who enrolled last year. But both groups — about 30 percent of all University of Kansas students — wouldn't see any increase in 2009-10.

For other University of Kansas students, tuition will increase 6 percent.

"There is inevitably a crystal ball element to this," said Provost Richard Lariviere.

At Wichita State, tuition would increase 5.9 percent for students from Kansas but only 5 percent for non-Kansans so that it would remain competitive with out-of-state schools, its officials said. Fort Hays State proposed tuition increases of 5.5 percent.

Tuition at Pittsburg State would increase by up to 5.8 percent.

Kansas State proposed no increase for freshmen and sophomores on its Salina campus, which
emphasizes technology. For other students, the increase would range from 1.9 percent to 7.4 percent.
KU Announces More Than 4,450 Candidates For Degrees

LAWRENCE — The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring — representing 95 Kansas counties, 48 other states and the District of Columbia and 44 other countries — have been announced by the University Registrar. KU’s Class of 2008 numbers more than 7,000, including 2,555 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2007. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these candidates for degrees will return Sunday, May 18, for the university’s 136th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium. More than 4,000 members of the Class of 2008 are expected to participate.

Wabaunsee County –

Alma - Amanda Renee Lasswell, daughter of Scott and Richelle Lasswell, Community HealthBSE Senior Bachelor of Science in Education, Saint Marys High School, Saint Marys.

Alma - Cassie L. Scripter, daughter of Leland and Cindy Schultz, MedicineMD Prof 1 Doctor of Medicine Council Grove High School, Council Grove.

Alma - Jenny L Wilson, daughter of L Scott and Charlene Wilson, Occupational StudiesBS, Senior Bachelor of Science in Occupational Studies Wabaunsee Senior High School, Alma.

Maple Hill - Preston Dean Hoobler, son of Sidney Hoobler, Communication StudiesBGS DECL Senior Bachelor of General Studies/Communication Studies, Rossville High School, Rossville.

Paxico - Sharon Ann Johnson, daughter of Wayne Johnson, Sport ScienceBSE Senior Bachelor of Science in Education, Wabaunsee Senior High School, Alma.

Osage County –

Burlingame - Casey Marie Montgomery, daughter of Don Montgomery, PsychologyBA DECL Senior Bachelor of Arts/Psychology, Burlingame High School, Burlingame.

Shawnee County –

Auburn - Edgar Ronald Austria, son of Eduardo and Marife Austria, MicrobiologyBS Senior Bachelor of Science in Microbiology, Hayden High School, Topeka.

Auburn - Nathan W Davis, son of Harold and Karon Davis, FinanceBSB Senior Bachelor of Science in Business/Finance, Washburn Rural High School, Topeka.

Auburn Jennifer Rose Gross, daughter of Tom and Aimee Gross, NursingBSN Senior Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Washburn Rural High School, Topeka.
TOPEKA (HNS) — State universities generally asked for the lowest percentage tuition increases in several years Thursday.

But some of the hikes wouldn't be as low as higher education leaders had initially hoped.

Officials from the state's six public universities outlined their proposals for increasing tuition and fees beginning next fall to the state Board of Regents, which could take a final vote on the requests in June.

But some students at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University could face jumps exceeding 6 percent, the rate of increase in tuition that Regents said they preferred to keep hikes below in February.

As a result, some board members reiterated their concerns about whether the state could be making a university education too costly for many Kansans to afford.

"There are kids out there where it's not a matter of (giving up) a latte as to whether they get a college education," said Regent Gary Sherrer of Overland Park, a former lieutenant governor to Bill Graves.

The funding would bring in millions of additional dollars to help state universities accomplish tasks like offsetting rising energy costs and boosting salaries to recruit and keep top-notch faculty members.

Board Chairwoman Christine Downey-Schmidt of Inman said that college educations are valuable to students and ensuring that the state's universities have the resources they need to excel should also be a consideration for board members.

"I want to make sure we don't a sub-standard system as a result of this," Downey-Schmidt said of the board's discussions on making tuition hikes leaner.

The steepest proposed increase would be for incoming resident freshmen attending the University of Kansas, who would pay 9 percent more in tuition and fees than this year's crop of resident freshmen.

However, because they would be the second consecutive class to enter under KU's guaranteed tuition compact, they would receive the same tuition rate for four years.

KU sophomores would see no increase this year under that compact while juniors and seniors would see their tuition and fees go up about 6.7 percent.

In addition, Kansas State University wants to boost charges on juniors and seniors at its Manhattan campus by about 7.5 percent, giving them a higher tuition rate than underclassmen, who'd see a 5 percent jump.

Tom Rawson, K-State's vice president for administration and finance, said the move would implement a three-tier pricing structure at the university, a first at a Kansas public university.

Under the system, college freshmen and sophomores would pay the lowest rate while graduate students would pay the highest. Juniors and seniors, whose classes can often involve more expensive laboratory work, would fall in the middle.

The university's Salina campus, which focuses on technology and aviation, would also feature a three-tier system of its own.

Pre-college students taking courses would receive a newly created tuition rate, $100 per credit hour. Underclassmen would see no increases in tuition and fees next year while upperclassmen would pay about 1.6 percent more than at present.
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The new policy is being adopted after the discovery of several convicted felons working in a department at the University of Kansas.

The policy adopted Wednesday makes exceptions for student and temporary workers, but all other new employees are subject to criminal background checks. That includes a review of the sex offender registry.

The policy is modeled after a one used for years at KU Medical Center. The policy discussion began after reports in news media, including a Lawrence Journal-World investigation that discovered a number of convicted felons working in one University of Kansas department.

KU Provost Richard Lariviere was a dean at University of Texas-Austin when a similar system was launched.

"It caused a considerable amount of angst from faculty and administrators when we implemented it, but ultimately it didn't cause any more difficulty in recruiting," he said.

At Pittsburg State and Fort Hays State universities, the issue of background checks may have to be part of negotiations with the faculty union.

"My bigger concern, though, is our international faculty and how we do background checks on people who aren't even in this country," said Ed Hammond, Fort Hays president.
Forty KU professors, staff tour Kansas, have dinner near Edson

By Sharon Corcoran

Forty University of Kansas staff members tour of Kansas will include a dinner with alumni Tuesday, at the Prairie Castle/Kuhrt Ranch north of Edson.

The dinner is part of the university’s 11th annual whirlwind tour of Kansas that covers more than 1,000 miles in five days, and will include professors, deans and other staff members, many of whom are new to the state, from the Lawrence campus, KU Medical Center in Kansas City, KU School of Medicine in Wichita and the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, a division of KU Continuing Education.

Rubbed with help from the KU Alumni Association, the dinner will be a chance for alumni in the area to meet with tour participants.

Faculty associated with the KU Medical Center and KU Cancer Center will give an update on the university’s work to support and improve health care in rural Kansas and efforts to achieve National Cancer Institute designation, through the Midwest Cancer Alliance, which includes Goodland Regional Medical Center.

The Northwest Chapter of the KU Alumni Association is led by Jeff Mason, a Goodland attorney with two degrees from KU, a Bachelor of Arts in political science in 1980 and a Juris Doctorate in 1983. On past tours, similar alumni dinners have been in Liberal, Hutchinson, Concordia, Dodge City and Colby.

There is a cost for the dinner, Mason said, and reservations have to be made through Sarah Blaney at (785) 864-9767.

The Wheat State Whirlwind Tour will hit the road Monday, visiting more than 20 communities and passing through 30 counties while covering in excess of 1,000 miles of roadway. Stops include Topeka, Barnes, Marysville, Concordia, Lucas, Palco, Goodland, Oakley, Ness City, Hudson, Dodge City, Spearville, Hutchinson, Inman, Yoder and Cottonwood Falls.

Chancellor Robert Hemenway, who started the Wheat State Whirlwind Tour, said the annual trip is an invaluable experience for the participants.

"Year after year, the tour has proven to be an outstanding way for KU faculty and staff to get out and learn firsthand what makes this great state tick," he said. "They not only learn about its history, landscape and economy, they get a better understanding of where KU’s students come from and meet some great people along the way."

It was organized several years ago, Mason said, to acquaint the professors and associate professors with what their students experience and what those towns are like, and they try to get to all four corners of the state each year.

Margey Frederick, director of special events and visitor services, said the tour is an opportunity for KU employees to discover Kansas’ hidden treasures and enhance their knowledge while having fun.

“Anyone who has gotten off the beaten path and really explored Kansas can tell you there is enough beauty and history in this state to supply a lifetime of traveling,” she said.

The third day of the trip will begin from Goodland and head to the bronze buffalo in Oakley. The larger-than-life statue, on west Second St. near the U.S. Highway 83 bypass, was created by artist Charlie Norton of Leoti. It depicts Buffalo Bill Cody atop his horse pursuing a bull buffalo.

The bus will wander off Highway 83 to give riders a look at the Monument Rocks in Gove County. Recently named one of the Eight Wonders of Kansas, the rocks were the first natural formation chosen by the Department of the Interior as a National Natural Landmark.

To view daily itineraries, maps of this year’s route and photos of previous tours, visit www.wheatstate.ku.edu. During the tour, visit www.ku.edu for a blog detailing the experiences of this year’s tour participants, photos from stops and updates on the tour.
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Day tour of Wheat State Whirlwind Tour
to focus on beauty, treasures of Kansas

LAWRENCE — More than 40 University of Kansas faculty and staff will explore central and south-central Kansas on Thursday, May 22, stopping along the way to learn more about wind power, military history, old-time flour milling and the hidden treasures of Kansas on the fourth day of the 2008 Wheat State Whirlwind Tour.

Chancellor Robert Hemenway sponsors the tour, now in its 11th year. The trip takes KU faculty and staff, many new to Kansas, throughout the state to give them a firsthand look at the culture, economy, history and landscape of the Sunflower State.

The day's travels will begin with a 7:50 a.m. visit to the Spearville Wind Farm in Ford County. The site, located north of Highway 50/56, is home to 67 one and one-half megawatt turbines. The turbines, completed in 2006, can produce enough energy to power 33,000 homes.

Fort Larned is the next scheduled stop on the tour. The National Historic Site was home to troops who guarded the Santa Fe Trail. The fort, which features nine restored buildings, also was the site of an Indian agency, responsible for maintaining civil relations with Plains Indians. Participants will tour the fort, learning more about the role it played in early frontier Kansas.

The faculty and staff then will head to Hudson, where they will tour the Stafford County Flour Mill. The mill was established in 1882 by German immigrant Gustav Krug and celebrated 100 years of making Hudson Cream flour in 2007. The plant has survived fires, tornadoes and financial difficulties to continue milling over the years.

While in Hudson, the group will have lunch at the community building, catered by the Wheatland Café. After lunch, the bus will roll on to the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge near Stafford. The site is a haven for migratory waterfowl like ducks, pelicans and shore birds, as well as land-dwelling animals such as bobcats, deer and coyotes. The refuge is also a favorite spot of wildlife enthusiasts, welcoming bird watchers, nature photographers and during designated times of year, hunters.

The Underground Salt Museum in Hutchinson, one of the Eight Wonders of Kansas, is the next stop. Located 650 feet below ground, the museum is housed in a working salt mine and takes visitors on a "dark ride," a tram tour through unlit areas of the mine. Antique mining equipment and displays chronicling advances in mining techniques are part of the cavernous, temperature- and humidity-controlled rooms.

The final stop of the evening will be a dinner hosted by Marci Penner at the Kansas Sampler Foundation in Inman. Penner, a former KU basketball player, is director of the foundation and author of the "Kansas Guidebook for Explorers." Both encourage people to explore all the state has to offer from border to border.

The 2008 Wheat State Whirlwind Tour will conclude Friday, May 23, with visits to the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center in Yoder, Highland Ranch in Lyon County and Cottonwood Falls.

To view daily itineraries, maps of this year's route and photos of previous tours, visit www.wheatstate.ku.edu. During the tour, visit www.wheatstate.ku.edu/blog for a blog detailing the experiences of this year's tour participants, photos from stops and updates on the tour.

**Itinerary for Thursday, May 22**

7:30 a.m. — Depart for Spearville Wind Farm (16 miles)
7:50 a.m. — Slow drive by wind farm, moving on to Fort Larned (45 miles)
8:45 a.m. — Arrive at Fort Larned; tour of fort
10:10 a.m. — Depart Fort Larned for Hudson (30 miles)
11 a.m. — Arrive in Hudson; tour Stafford County Flour Mill
Noon — Lunch in Hudson
1 p.m. — Depart for Quivira National Wildlife Refuge; stop at visitor center
2:45 p.m. — Arrive at Underground Salt Museum (elevators at 3 and 3:20 p.m.)
5 p.m. — Depart for Inman (16 miles)
5:30 p.m. — Arrive at the Kansas Sampler Foundation; dinner with Marci Penner
7:30 p.m. — Depart for McPherson (10 miles)
7:45 p.m. — Check in at Holiday Inn Express and Best Western Holiday Manor.