Tuition proposal

The University of Kansas wants to give a tuition break to the children and grandchildren of out-of-state alumni. Its officials are asking the Legislature for help.

They're backing a bill to give the state Board of Regents more flexibility in setting tuition. The regents could then permit universities to give groups of out-of-state students the lower tuition rates reserved for Kansans.

The House Higher Education Committee had a hearing Tuesday on the bill but took no action.

Provost Richard Lariviere (La-RIH-vee-ehr) said the University of Kansas wants to adopt a "legacy" plan to help attract students from families of graduates living outside Kansas. Kansas State University's student body president also spoke in favor of the measure.
KU CRACKING DOWN ON TICKET SCALPERS

The Associated Press

LAWRENCE — The University of Kansas is using plain-clothes officers at basketball games to crack down on ticket scalpers.

This basketball season, university public safety officers have been mingling with fans looking for people wanting to buy or sell tickets. In recent weeks outside Kansas basketball games, officers have given three citations for criminal trespassing to people suspected of scalping tickets.

Capt. Schuyler Bailey said officers tend to be busier during the more high-profile basketball games, especially since Big 12 play started in January. Officers concentrate on educating people first.

“We notify them of university policy and tell them if you are seen again doing this, you could be subject to an arrest,” Bailey said.

Before the Kansas State University game Jan. 13, a man — whom police said they warned previously — was issued a notice to appear in Lawrence Municipal Court after he offered game tickets to an undercover officer.

Also, before the Texas A&M game Jan. 19, officers in plain clothes issued criminal trespassing citations to two men for soliciting the officers for tickets.

City prosecutor Jerry Little said a conviction in these trespassing cases can carry a maximum fine of $1,000 and up to six months in jail.

The three citations in the last month are probably a little bit higher than what officers normally issue, Bailey said.

“We’re not going to keep warning the same people,” he said.

Kansas officials began asking public safety officers to crack down on scalpers outside sporting events in 2005.

Associate athletic director Jim Marchiony said the athletics department had received complaints before about scalpers approaching fans.

“We’ve gotten fewer complaints from our patrons certainly the last couple of years,” he said.

Officers wait to observe a transaction before they approach someone on the street, Bailey said.
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AP CEO urges better press access to military ops

The Associated Press

LAWRENCE — The Bush administration turned the U.S. military into a global propaganda machine while imposing tough restrictions on journalists seeking to give the public truthful reports about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Associated Press chief executive Tom Curley said Friday.

Curley, speaking to journalists at the University of Kansas, said the news industry must immediately negotiate a new set of rules for covering war because “we are the only force out there to keep the government in check and to hold it accountable.”

Much like in Vietnam, “civilian policymakers and soldiers alike have cracked down on independent reporting from the battlefield” when the news has been unflattering, Curley said.

“Top commanders have told me that if I stood and the AP stood by its journalistic principles, the AP and I would be ruined.”

Curley said in a brief interview that he didn’t take the commanders’ words as a threat but as “an expression of anger.” Late in 2007, Curley wrote an editorial about the detention of AP photographer Bilal Hussein, held by the military for more than two years.

Eleven of AP’s journalists have been detained in Iraq for more than 24 hours since 2003. Last year, according to cases AP is tracking, news organizations had eight employees detained for more than 48 hours.

AP, the world’s largest newsgathering operation, is a not-for-profit cooperative that began in 1846 to communicate news from the Mexican War. Curley has been the company’s president and CEO since 2003.

Before his speech, Curley met for about a half-hour with Lt. Gen. William Caldwell IV, a former spokesman for the U.S. military activities. At the same time, Curley said, the military has grown more aggressive in withholding information and hindering reporters.

Curley said a military program to embed reporters with battlefield units in Iraq was successful in 2003, the war’s first year. But afterward, the military expanded its rules from one to four pages, and Curley said they’re now so vague, a journalist can be expelled on a whim if a commander doesn’t like what’s being reported.

“Americans understand hardships and setbacks,” he said. “They expect honest answers about what’s happening to their sons and daughters.”

Caldwell now requires officers who attend Fort Leavenworth’s staff college to blog and “engage” the media.

“Not only when it’s good stuff, but when it’s challenging,” Caldwell said.

Curley acknowledged that upon taking office, President Barack Obama rolled back many of the policies instituted by George W. Bush. But he said when the Pentagon faces difficulties again — perhaps in Afghanistan, with the new administration’s focus on it — experience has shown, “the military gets tough on the journalists.”

“So now is the time to re-negotiate the rules of engagement between the military and the media,” he said. “Now is the time to insist that the First Amendment does apply to the battlefield.”

He added: “Now is the time to resist the propaganda the Pentagon produces and live up to our obligation to question authority and thereby help protect our democracy.”

Curley said examining the Defense Department’s spending on its public relations efforts and psychological operations is difficult because many of the budgets are classified.

He said the Pentagon has kept
in Iraq, Caldwell is commander at Fort Leavenworth where military doctrines are drafted and a staff college trains both American and foreign officers.

"It's important for us to be very transparent," Caldwell said during an interview after Curley's speech. "If we do those things, ultimately, we're both trying to do the same thing."

Curley came to the University of Kansas to receive this year's national citation for journalistic excellence from the William Allen White Foundation. Curley also won national awards in 2007 and 2008 for his work on First Amendment and open records issues.

Answering questions from his audience of about 160 people, Curley said AP remains concerned about journalists' detentions. He said most seem to occur when someone else, often a competitor, "trashes" the journalist.

"There is a procedure that takes place which sounds an awful lot like torture to us," Curley said. "If people agree to trash other people, they are freed. If they don't immediately agree to trash other people, they are kept for some period of time — two or three weeks — and they are put through additional questioning."

His remarks came a day after an AP investigation disclosed that the Pentagon is spending at least $4.7 billion this year on "influence operations" and has more than 27,000 employees devoted to such secret some information that used to be available to the public, and its public affairs officers at the Pentagon gather intelligence on reporters' work rather than serve as sources.

Curley traced the propaganda efforts to former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. He cited a 2003 operations "road map" signed by Rumsfeld, declaring that psychological operations had been neglected for too long. Curley also noted that the current secretary, Robert Gates, has defended such efforts, including in a speech at Kansas State University in 2007.

"But does America need to resort to al-Qaida tactics?" Curley said. "Should the U.S. government be running Web sites that appear to be independent news organizations?" Should the military be planting stories in foreign newspapers? Should the United States be trying to influence public opinion through subterfuge, both here and abroad?"

Both the award Curley received at the University of Kansas and its journalism school are named for White, who was publisher of the Emporia Gazette until 1944. A Pulitzer Prize winning editorial writer, White's commentary and friendships with prominent Americans made him a national figure.

"There's no doubt that White would have been angered by the last eight years," Curley said. "The right to access information and the ability to know the source of that information were diminished."
Lt. Gen. William Caldwell IV, left, talks with Tom Curley, president and CEO of The Associated Press, at a William Allen White day event Friday at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.
Local leaders differ on impact of Prop K

by Mark Anderson
editor@kiowacountysignal.com

Should the manner in which property is valued for tax purposes be changed? That depends on whom you ask to comment on the so-called Proposition K just starting to make its way through the legislative process in Topeka.

Though all three admit to being less than fully familiar with details of the proposal at this point, Kiowa County Commission Chair Gene West, Greensburg City Administrator Steve Hewitt and 116th District House Representative Pat Maloney did take time Thursday morning to comment on the pending legislation.

Originally fashioned by Arthur Hall, a former economist for Koch Industries who now heads the Center for Applied Economics at the University of Kansas, Prop K's signature feature is automating the property-appraisal process and limiting property valuation increases to two percent in a given year. Rep. Steve Brunk, R-Bel Aire, introduced the measure in the Kansas House last Wednesday.

Brunk and other supporters of the measure contend Prop K would bring stability to property taxation and push local forms of government to more intentionally justify tax hikes, as opposed to simply letting rises in appraised value push spending higher from one year to the next. The watchword for acolytes of the proposal is transparency, meaning county and city government would be more prone to having to raise the mill levy to increase tax revenue if valuation were capped at two percent a year. The transparency issue is one that makes sense to Hewitt.

"I think it does allow more transparency," Hewitt said. "If you leave the mill levy the same as the year before while valuation goes up, you can tell people 'We didn't raise your taxes.' But is that really true? Maybe you didn't actively raise their taxes, but you allowed their values to go up through increased valuation, so in a sense you did raise their taxes.

"I believe in zero based budgeting where you justify every dollar spent. Departments are forced to look at what they need to do that year and how much it will cost, and where you stand on raising the revenue to fund it. If valuation increase is capped, then you have to raise the mill levy if you're going to come up short of needed funding. That way government must prove what it wants to do and how it will pay for it."

West, on the other hand, thinks implementing Prop K would have the opposite of the intended effect.

"I think it makes things less transparent because it hides the true value (of property) since no one knows what property is really worth if you're artificially limiting its valuation from one year to the next," West said. "That's especially true after a number of years. Let's say property in a certain place is actually appreciating five percent a year on average in value. After five years its value has gone up 25 percent, but only a 10 percent increase has been allowed under this plan, so you've got a gap of 15 percent.

"What you're paying taxes on will have no correlation to the true value of property after a number of years, and that will eventually have to be leveled out. When that happens there could be a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Sandy Jacquot, general counsel for the Kansas League of Municipalities, knows much the same concern as West, having recently been quoted as saying, "The problem with this kind of legislation is it's artificial—it's not market driven." Like West, Jacquot has voiced concerns over property tax valuations being divorced from the reality of market forces in favor of a one-size-fits-all system.

Brunk points out that while landmark property tax measures of the past like California's Proposition 13 prevented government from increasing property taxes, Prop K would allow the local authority to raise taxes by adjusting the mill levy.

Pointing out, however, that the County's mill levy was as high as 60 mills "not that long ago" and currently sits at 48 mills, West implied stability in mill levy rather than valuation is more palatable as well as being more economically realistic.

"Our (the county's) valuation went up about $4 million this last year," he said. "Our mill levy would've stayed about the same if not for the building (projects) we're doing now, which means we had to go up about one-and-a-third mills. That would've been an increase of more like three to four mills if the valuation rise would've been capped."

West also points out that, unlike any of the cities of the county, Kiowa County is affected far more by shifting valuations of such commodity related resources as oil and gas production, attendant pipelines and agricultural land, rather than housing.

Because of that, he admits Prop K has a natural, populist appeal for those of a more urban setting such as Johnson County, where valuation centers more exclusively on housing and commercial space, especially in view of the measure providing for property buyers inheriting their tax valuation from the seller, rather than having properties revalued based
on sale price.
Hewitt refers to Prop K’s basic premise of a two-percent cap on valuation increases as something that “seems like a fair way to deal with property tax” on a statewide basis. Unlike

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Though its impact on property valuation is most often argued in terms of housing, Proposition K’s limit on the rise of valuation in a rural county such as Kiowa has even greater implications for such resources as oil and gas production, farm land, and various pipelines that crisscross the area. This shot was taken a half mile east of Greensburg just south of US 54.
Valuation:
from page 1.

the County, however, a municipality like Greensburg relies far less on property taxation to raise revenue; sales tax and utility revenue bring in the lion’s share of funding, meaning year to year adjustment of mill levy is less of a factor if property valuation is indeed capped.

Though it's been tagged Proposition K, the fate of Brunk's measure won't be determined by voters. It will instead meet its fate as a regular bill to be dealt with in the Legislature. Because of that, constituents will likely be looking in the coming days for signs from their representatives in Topeka as to how favorably they view the bill.

Pat Maloney, recently selected successor to longtime 116th District representative Dennis McKinney told The Signal Thursday morning that while he's yet to learn enough of Prop K's details to determine his stance on its future, he is open to at least the intent of the measure.

"I don't know that it's right that they (local politicians) don't have to raise taxes (by raising the mill levy) just because the dang valuation keeps going up," Maloney said. "As for this being a more transparent way of handling this I think that has some merit."

Maloney went on to say, however, he'd need to "study" the measure more before deciding whether or not he'll support its passage through the House.

"I've got the information on my desk and haven't gotten to it yet, and I know it's being discussed and proposed, but I need to learn more about it before saying whether I'm yea or nay on it," he said. "It's too early for me to have a feel for its chances of passage. I should know a lot more this time next week."
Hett Earns BS in Education

LAWRENCE—The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2008 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of the Registrar. Maryanne Hett of Deerfield was among those named. A graduate of Deerfield High School, she has earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education.
Students participate in Kansas honor band

The Kansas John Philip Sousa Honor Band is a statewide honor band open to students in grades six through nine. Participants in the band are selected by audition and are among the most talented middle level musicians in the state of Kansas. Of the 347 students who auditioned this year, 83 were selected for the top band, the Blue Band, and 106 were selected for the Red Band.

From St. Francis, eighth grader Sarah Whitmore, flute, and freshman Logan Whitmore, trumpet, were each selected to play fourth chair in the Blue Band.

"This is quite an accomplishment and a great honor for Sarah and Logan," said Debbie Fiala, St. Francis Music Director for the Junior/Senior High Schools. "Not only are they the first students from St. Francis to audition for the Sousa Honor Band, but they were competing against students from much larger school districts such as Wichita and Kansas City.”

Logan and Sarah traveled to the University of Kansas on Jan. 23 and 24 where they rehearsed with fellow honor band members Friday evening and Saturday morning. On Saturday afternoon, they performed in a public concert at the Lied Center on the University of Kansas campus. The Blue Band was under the direction of Douglas Akey, renowned composer and band director at Hendrix Junior High School in Chandler, Ariz.

Sarah and Logan are music students of Mrs. Fiala. They also take private lessons from Neal Russell, a retired band director in Oberlin.
Special to the Globe
Douglas Martinek, a field agent for the Knights of Columbus Insurance, has recently been assigned to the Atchison and the Highway 4 corridor area councils. He is responsible for providing service to the Knights of Columbus members and their families in Meriden, Perry, Valley Falls, Nortonville, Effingham, Mooney Creek and Atchison.

Offering life insurance has been a part of the organization’s program since its founding in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney. Knights of Columbus insurance is rated AAA (Superior) by Standard & Poor’s and A++ (Superior) by AM Best Co. Mr. Martinek has a FIC fraternal designation and he is a member of the NAIFC and FIC.

Mr. Martinek has a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Kansas. He has been a member of the Knights for more than 45 years and is a past state deputy and a former district master of the fourth degree in the state of Tennessee. He and his wife, Patricia, make their home in Topeka and can be reached at (785) 478-1858.
LCC offers classes through KU’s Osher Institute

PARSONS — Labette Community College will be offering three classes through the University of Kansas’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute this spring. While the program was originally designed to meet the needs of Senior Citizens, there is no minimum age to take a class and the cost is reasonable.

The first class is “Understanding Your Rights: the Supreme Court in American History,” taught by John Mack. It will be held in H109 on Feb. 19, 26, and March 5, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The second class is “Chinese and Japanese Garden Design,” taught by Nancy Hope from KU. It will be held in Conference Room #1 on March 18, 25, and April 1, from 2 to 4 p.m.

The third class is “NASA: Innovation, Exploration, & National Pride,” taught by Eileen Hawley, the voice of Mission Control at Johnson Space Center. It will be held in Conference Room #1 on April 13, 20 and 27, from 7 to 9 p.m.

LCC will also be sharing the Lincoln Presidential Lecture Series sponsored by the Dole Institute for Public Policy. These will be broadcast from the Dole Institute. The dates and topics are:

- Sunday, Feb. 8 at 4 p.m. “Abraham Lincoln: 200 years” with Richard Norton Smith
- Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 7:30 p.m. “Lincoln: A Life” with Michael Burlingame
- Tuesday, March 3 at 7:30 p.m. “A. Lincoln” with Ronald C. White, Jr.
- Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m. “Lincoln’s Challenging 1864 Re-election Campaign” with Jennifer L. Weber

An open house to learn more about the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and to register for classes will be held on Feb. 4 from 4 to 6 p.m. in Conference Room #1 on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. For questions, please visit LCC’s website at www.labette.edu or contact Sara Harris at sarah@labette.edu or (620) 421-6700, ext. 1255.
Two Chanute students semester grads at KU

LAWRENCE — The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2008 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of the Registrar.

Graduate and undergraduate degrees are conferred in December based on work completed during the fall semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall or summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill and into Memorial Stadium on Sunday, May 17, 2009.

Five of KU's 13 colleges and schools conducted recognition programs or hooding ceremonies last month to honor those planning to graduate at the end of the semester: the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Engineering, the School of Law and the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

From Chanute: Jessica Leah King, daughter of Ronald King, Bachelor of Science in Business/Accounting; George Dale Reichert, son of John Reichert, Master of Accounting.
KU to honor area students

Area high school students will be recognized for academic achievement and being named Kansas Honor Scholars by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment at a dinner program Feb. 9 at Iola High School.

The Kansas Honors Program, which began in 1971 and has honored more than 100,000 students, honors students who placed in the top 10 percent of their high school senior class. During the ceremony each student will receive an American Heritage dictionary. Community volunteers who will serve as local contacts for the event are Jim and Karen Gilpin.

Honored students from Iola High School will be Morgan Buchholz, Kyle Carswell, Morgan Dieker, Jacob Heffern, Kelsey Knisley, Michelle Kretzmeier, Kyle McRae, Drew Mueller, Preeya Patel, Lauren Porter and Joel Tidd.

From Humboldt High School: Todd Hauser, Shelley Herder, Bailey Myers, Kelci Owens and David Setter.

From Uniontown High School: Kaylan Colgin, Robert McEwan and Jessica Roach.

From Yates Center High School: Michael Bettega, Taylor Heffern, Jordan Hughes, Jacob Pennuto and Brent Matile.