

AAUP | Association considers budget in light of Gov. Nixon's suggested reduction of appropriations

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Lincoln University is the only comparable institution in Missouri with lower faculty salaries than Truman, according to public data from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

During the November meeting, Paino presented a five-step plan that included an additional \$1,000 increase for full professors with six years of service and higher starting salaries to attract new faculty. Now that Paino is leaving Truman, he said he hopes to lay the framework for full implementation of his proposal before he leaves. Paino said a faculty committee worked on the proposal last semester and submitted it to the provost.

"I think that there are questions that faculty continue to have and that we need to continue to talk about," Paino said. "But my sense from Faculty Senate is that they were overall pleased with the attempts and the efforts, and wanted to see those efforts continue to move forward."

Paino said the proposal he put forth during the November forum has not really changed, but the last stage in the five-step process — offering certain professors a pay raise — is the only stage yet to be realized. Paino said it is now a question of getting the plan in place and making sure the University has the resources to do it, and he hopes next year will be the time to implement the final step. He said the only thing that has changed is faculty wanting to take more immediate action to combat salary compression. One thing the administration has been considering is a plan that might help it address faculty salaries based on seniority, Paino said. He said any plan will require funding, and it remains uncertain what Truman's budget will look like next year.

Paino said a complicating factor in the efforts to raise faculty salaries is the announcement last week that Gov. Jay Nixon's proposal of a 5.5 percent increase in state appropriations will be reduced to 2 percent and might not even be released unless the state reaches a certain revenue level during June. Paino said because the increase is much lower than expected, it will make finding solutions to the salary issue even more difficult.

"In order to do any of this, at least under the assumption of a zero percent increase, we're going to have to make cuts somewhere in the budget," Paino said. "And we have not yet identified where we would cut to find that money."

"I think that there are questions that faculty continue to have and that we need to continue to talk about."

— University

President Troy Paino

Paino said he plans to put all of his ideas and information regarding faculty salaries in writing for the interim president. He said Truman will benefit from a stable administration when he leaves. He said the Vice President of Finance will still be here next year but he said he doesn't want to tie the hands of the interim president.

"It's not law, and all of these things are contingent upon funding, and if we get budget cuts from the state, or we have an enrollment dip, whatever the case may be, I think any administration is going to have to be flexible," Paino said.

Marc Rice, president of Truman's AAUP chapter, said talks for faculty raises next year are still in flux. Rice said he is in the process of reaching out to the state chapter of AAUP to try to make a statement collectively across many Missouri institutions.

Rice said AAUP is encouraging the president of the state chapter to create some way for AAUP members to make a statement about the state budget.

Rice said the Truman Board of Governors will determine what money they are going to have to work with next year. Rice said officially it will be up to the Faculty Senate Budget Committee to talk with the administration about implementing plans for raising salaries.

One thing the AAUP potentially could do is form a collective bargaining group, which Rice said AAUP has not wanted to do in the past because it historically has had a good relationship with the administration. Rice said he thinks Paino realized there was a crisis of morale in terms of salaries, and that Paino has done his best to say he would do what he could to rectify the issue.

"If we form a collective bargaining unit, people may get the fear that there is a less-than-congenial relationship," Rice said.

Rice said the AAUP's mission right now is to expand membership, and it is hoping for a large turnout at its March meeting.

"These two things have come as a real blow — the announcement about the budget and Paino's announcement of [his] leaving," Rice said. "And I'd just like people to not get discouraged, because discouragement can't help solve the problems. To be optimistic, to think that there are things that can be done, there are positive things that can still happen."

STEAM | Local education group seeks to build community makerspaces to encourage creativity

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Attendees gathered to listen to speakers, learn about local projects and plan for the future of STEAM in Kirksville.

Alliance Committee Chair Danielle Madsen said one of the primary purposes of the summit was to discuss a community makerspace, an area where community members can use tools and access experts to create STEAM-related projects.

Madsen said a makerspace can be compared to a community gym membership.

"Instead of weights, you have equipment and tools with which to create," Madsen said. "Instead of a personal trainer, you have a community of people willing to help you learn how to use the equipment."

Alliance Committee member Susan Hazen said the summit served as a brainstorming meeting for the space and included presentations from representatives of makerspaces in other communities. She said small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs have used makerspaces to create new products, which could affect Kirksville's small businesses.

Hazen said several STEAM programs already exist for Kirksville students. She said there is a Maker Club that meets weekly at the high school as well as a robotics club, where the students are able to use engineering and technology tools, including a 3-D printer. She said there is an emphasis on encouraging girls as well as boys to participate in STEAM fields. Hazen said through a grant from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, she was able to start several female coding clubs in Northeast Missouri.

"I would love to see that expand because we don't want the boys left out," Hazen said. "It would be awesome to in-

clude the boys as well, but often the boys find it on their own. The girls often don't join or pursue that on their own."

Rich Chapman teaches a high school engineering class at the Kirksville Area Technical Center. Chapman said his goal is to see more gender diversity in the class and expand the class to a four-year program that would enable students to graduate high school with college credit in engineering courses.

Chapman said currently students are able to earn three hours of college credit through the University of Iowa by passing the class' final exam, and he hopes to accredit the course through the Missouri University of Science & Technology.

"Instead of weights, you have equipment and tools with which to create."

— Alliance Committee Chair
Danielle Madsen

Alliance Committee member Joe Vincent said the community already has multiple groups creating STEAM-related projects. He said there are community members with the necessary knowledge that would be able to lead, and the makerspace would help streamline these groups and individuals.

One of the presentations at the conference was a three-layer maze built by three Faith Lutheran School students, which a robot could solve. The students are in the process of completing the maze.

"We're not done yet," seventh grader Luciana Scuderi said. "We ran into a problem with the ramps, but we're hoping to finish it soon."

HALO | Truman's Hispanic-American Leadership Organization looks to include more members

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For example, he said HALO reached out to students from Panama, who hope to be involved with HALO. Escobar said he thinks more members would be beneficial.

"If we have more people from different countries, we have a community that is more multicultural and inclusive, and that's positive for a little, conservative town like this," Escobar said. "It's good to have that kind of flavor. There is something you cannot learn in school from books and from classes, and that's culture. If you want to know a culture, meet its people."

Escobar said to go to a university, people need money and resources. He

said people who are poor in the Hispanic community don't have those resources.

Escobar said Hispanics who come to work in the U.S. and to provide for their families in their own countries cannot invest money and resources in themselves to go to Truman. Escobar said they don't have time to go to school.

HALO also will host free salsa dancing lessons — dates and times to be announced. Until then, Escobar said the first Saturday of every month, HALO has a Latino night at Geno's 70's Club with a DJ from Venezuela, and anyone is welcome. Additionally, Escobar said he encourages everyone to participate in diversity week, which will take place during the third week of April.

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