



**a distraction: University of Missouri name change**

As an alumnus of the University of Missouri-St. Louis and a state senator I am concerned that higher education leaders have become distracted from the important issues facing our families with college aged young adults. Two years ago the Missouri Legislature dealt with the regional name change which resulted in Southwest Missouri State University becoming Missouri State.

The impact of the change is negligible as enrollment continues to increase at both the newly named Missouri State and Missouri's premier institution—the University of Missouri-Columbia. The mission of Missouri State did not change either. Tuition was not reduced nor accessibility addressed. Higher education leaders' egos should come second to the needs of students and families struggling to pay for college.

Currently the 40 percent of Missouri families, earning the least, pay an average of 46 percent of their income to pay for college according to *Measuring Up 2006: The National Report Card on Higher Education, The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 9/7/06*.

According to data compiled by the Missouri Higher Education Compact, tuition rates for four-year colleges and universities have increased by 30.5 percent in the last four years. The National Report Card gave Missouri a failing grade when it comes to affordability. Missouri students have an average student debt of \$16,505 upon graduation from a four-year institution and for the third year in a row, high school drop-out rates increased.

Nearly 50 percent of a working family's annual income goes to send a kid to college. Tuition for Missouri Universities has risen at staggering rates. Since 1999, average annual public university tuition in Missouri increased nearly 75%, from \$2,238 to \$3,380 in 2005. In the same period, average annual private university tuition in Missouri increased over 45%, from \$9,525 to \$13,841. Policy makers and higher education leaders should not be distracted by name changes- they should be focused on college affordability and accessibility.

Sincerely,  
/s/

**Timothy P. Green**  
Missouri State Senator  
13<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District

*Sen. Timothy Green represents North St. Louis County*