RI House Speaker: Gay Marriage bill won’t pass

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Pharmacy program changes curriculum, funds Friday class for fifth-year students

By KNIGHT PORTER

With the addition of a new pharmacy building and a want to improve its program, the University of Rhode Island's College of Pharmacy has made changes to its curriculum. Pharmacy students that will take place on Fridays.

This class will certify pharmacy students to do immunizations in Rhode Island pharmacies, Associate Professor of Pharmacy and Chair of the Curriculum Joan Lausier said next year, first-year pharmacy students will be engaging in the new integrated lab series which will require having a lab every semester from their junior year, when students are officially accepted into the pharmacy program, until their fifth year.

“Our goal is to make [pharmacy students] as valuable a practitioner as possible when we graduate them.”

Ronald Jordan, Dean of Pharmacy

Quilliam said the integrated lab series are a more comprehensive approach to teaching. For example, when teaching cardiovascular disease, students will look at the topic from several points of view and disciplines including medicinal chemistry, pharmacology, therapeutics and pathology.

“So rather than looking at those from disparate focuses, we’re going to have to make the best use of their time here in order to get them the certifications.”

URI senate approves to fund basketball courts

By HENSLEY CARRASCO

The University of Rhode Island Student Senate voted to approve a proposal from Housing and Residential Life (HRL) to fund two basketball courts on campus.

The $50,000 project, funded entirely by the Student Senate, will add a full-size basketball court behind Heathman Hall and Adams Hall residential buildings scheduled to be completed this September.

Student Senate President David Coates said there was also a plan, already in place by the university, to put a volleyball court funded by the university behind Heathman Hall. He said he was approached with the idea for the courts about a year ago, but didn’t go through with the idea because he wasn’t comfortable starting a new project without seeing enough improvement in the intramural field lighting and rock gym projects.

“I believe that, in the last three months or so, I’ve seen enough progress to be comfortable going forward,” Coates said.

He added that he is excited about the project. “I think it’s a great thing to do, especially because students will use it all the time. This is students’ activity tax and we’re literally creating more avenues for student activity.”

He said he was assured that by the fall semester the university would have a lit intramural field, allowing Coates to feel comfortable with the senate funding another project. Another reason that Coates advocated the senate’s funding of the courts is because he said the senate has the money to put toward this project.

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RI House speaker: Gay marriage bill won't pass

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Efforts to extend marriage rights to gay couples in Rhode Island suffered a decisive setback Wednesday when a key legislative champion said he was abandoning a push to pass gay marriage legislation this year.

House Speaker Gordon Fox, who is gay, said the legislation has “no realistic chance” of passing the state’s General Assembly this year. Fox, a Providence Democrat, said instead he will support new legislation creating civil unions that would offer substantially the same rights given by the state to married couples.

“This is the best we can do right now,” he said. “Full marriage will happen. I’m born and bred in Rhode Island. When I do get married it will be in my home state.”

The announcement deeply disappointed those who hoped this would be the year the Ocean State joined five other states in recognizing gay marriage. Groups that led the fight for gay marriage said they wouldn’t support any measure that falls short of full marriage. While a civil union may offer many of the legal rights of marriage, it’s still a separate, lesser category than marriage, said Martha Holt, board chairwoman of Marriage Equality Rhode Island.

“Civil unions are a compromise for no one,” Holt said. “We are extremely disappointed in the lack of leadership at the Statehouse, and we would urge Speaker Fox to rethink sponsoring legislation that would create a second class of citizens.”

New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Iowa and Massachusetts and the District of Columbia have gay marriage laws.

Opponents of gay marriage said Fox’s decision is welcome news. But they are wary of civil unions, too, because states including Vermont started with civil unions before enacting gay marriage laws.

“Civil unions are a judicial stepping stone to same-sex marriage,” said Chris Plante, director of the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Organization for Marriage. “We’ll see what he (Fox) comes up with, but we have grave misgivings.”

Still, civil unions may be more politically palatable in the General Assembly. Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed’s opposition was a key obstacle to gay marriage legislation. The Newport Democrat says she supports civil union legislation and believes the bill will win broad support in the Senate.