Eye response may reveal autism

Published: Nov. 12, 2009 at 2:40 PM

COLUMBIA, Mo., Nov. 12 (UPI) -- U.S. researchers say measuring eye response to light could help diagnose autism earlier.

The University of Missouri in Columbia researchers find pupil response to light change was 92.5 percent accurate in separating children with autism from those with typical development.

In the study, published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, the researchers used a computerized binocular infrared device -- normally used by eye doctors for vision tests -- to measure how pupils react to a 100-millisecond flash light to find that the pupils of children diagnosed with autism were significantly slower to respond than those of a control group.

"There are several potential mechanisms currently under study," study leader Gang Yao said in a statement.

"If these results are successfully validated in a larger population, pupil response to light change might be developed into a biomarker that could have clinical implications in early screening for risks of autism. Studies have shown that early intervention will improve these children's developmental outcome."

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University of Missouri creates experimental winery

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- A University of Missouri research center that studies grape growth is creating an experimental winery.

The school's Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture and Enology provides research support to the state's 92 commercial wineries.

By setting up a winery, the institute can apply those experiments to the entire winemaking process.

The wine will be commercially available with a label that reflects its university affiliation.

Viticulture is the science of growing grapes. Enology is the science and study of wines and winemaking.
CPD investigating sexual assault at Delta Tau Delta

The incident report will remain closed until further details arise.

By Travis Cornejo
Published Nov. 13, 2009

A Columbia Police Department Major Crimes Unit investigator is looking into the reported sexual assault that occurred at 506 E. Rollins St. last weekend, CPD Lt. Ken Hammond said in an e-mail.

CPD spokeswoman Jessie Haden said the victim is a 19-year-old woman who does know the man who is suspected of raping her. Haden confirmed the reported address was the Delta Tau Delta fraternity house.

Haden also said the department is not giving out more information at this point in the investigation of the reported sexual assault.

"It's just too fresh," Haden said. "She's obviously not feeling very comfortable. Any more information we'd give out could compromise the investigation."

Haden said the reported incident happened in the early morning hours of Nov. 7 but CPD did not get the original report until a couple of days after.

As of Wednesday, no arrests have been made, Hammond said in the e-mail.

"It's an open investigation," Greek Life Director Janna Basler said. "As soon as we are able to find out more details and go through our process, then we can comment on it."

Basler also said that goes for any judicial situation for any chapter.

Interfraternity Council President Danny Jonas did not return phone calls

IFC primary adviser Julie Drury could not be reached for comment.

Hammond said under the Missouri Revised Statutes, the report of the assault is considered an "investigative report," which is defined as a record other than an arrest or incident report prepared by a law enforcement agency that inquires into a crime or suspected crime. The reports can be filed in response to evidence developed by law enforcement officers in the course of their duties.

Hammond said this report is considered a "closed" record because it is under investigation.
JEFFERSON CITY — Upon taking office, Robert Stein said morale within the Missouri Department of Higher Education was low, employee turnover was high and communication between other departments wasn't very effective.

Stein announced earlier this year he intends to retire in June 2010. He said during his three years as the department's commissioner, some of his achievements include increasing interdepartmental communication and cooperation among the Higher Education Department, its governing board and the General Assembly.

"They all come with different viewpoints," Stein said. "It was important to develop a strategy to understand common interests — to have creative, innovative solutions. Communication stumbling blocks prevent the development of positive policy works."

Stein also has tried to remedy the high turnover. Since he took office in 2006, employee turnover has decreased by 28 percent, according to numbers provided by the department.

Within the hierarchy of state government, Stein holds the top higher education position. He sits on Gov. Jay Nixon's Cabinet. His department evaluates student and institutional performance, sets policy and administers student financial assistance.

But the reality is, it's not as much power as it sounds. Missouri's constitution provides only limited authority to the position and gives independent authority to the various university governing boards, such as the UM System Board of Curators.

"Both types of boards must have the leadership and ability to work collaboratively toward systemic goals, and to use data and other evidence to influence initiatives and
policy," said Stein, who has spent more than 40 years in higher education with more than half served in Missouri.

Stein has held both faculty and administrative positions in the university setting, such as assistant vice president for academic affairs and interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Northern Colorado. He also has held various positions within the Higher Education Department.

Greg Upchurch, vice chairman of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, said Stein's ability to communicate has made him an effective commissioner.

"Robert is very strong on making every voice heard," Upchurch said. "He's a consensus builder."

Kathy Swan, former chairwoman and current member of the board, said she thinks his greatest success as commissioner was developing himself as a resource.

"If we had a question about something, within a minute or two he knew who to call," she said. "He always followed up. He has a style that really builds trust."

The Coordinating Board for Higher Education has appointed a committee that will meet sometime in December to begin the search for a new commissioner. As for his own future, Stein said he has no specific plans but might like to learn Spanish.

"I look forward to waking up and saying, 'What do I want to do before I die?'" he said. "And then I'm going to do it. I'm not afraid of tomorrow."
Forsee calls for town hall budget meetings

MU will host the last meeting Monday, Dec. 9.

By Rachel Allred
Published Nov. 13, 2009

Budget plans and strains of the UM system will be the focus of a series of town hall meetings which are set to be held throughout the next few weeks.

UM system President Gary Forsee will be conducting a meeting on each of the four university campuses. The first town hall meeting will be held at UM-St. Louis on Nov. 17. The last meeting will be held Monday, Dec. 9 at MU.

Through an e-mail sent Nov. 6, Forsee invited all faculty, administrators and staff to attend and participate in the meetings.

"I want to be sure we have ample opportunity to engage in a discussion about balancing how we plan to deal with ongoing financial challenges with the important actions we need to focus on to ensure our continued strength for the next decade," Forsee said in the e-mail.

UM system spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said Forsee and the chancellors of the various universities would be collaborating during the meetings to inform employees of rising issues.

"Each chancellor is hosting the town halls and will join the president in discussions with their campus communities about the challenges and opportunities facing the university in the coming years," Hollingshead said.

Forsee said there is a looming budget challenge facing the system, including possible adjustments to state funding, which will affect the budget in future years and various measures have been made to stay in control of the situation.

Despite challenging economic times, he said it is important for the UM system to keep a strong stance as an exemplary educational system.

"While the daily headlines continue to portray a struggling recovery on Main Street, I want us to focus on our role in the recovery of the economy and our continued importance to Missouri as the most significant force in higher education in our state," Forsee said.

Hollingshead said Forsee wants to keep faculty updated and give them an opportunity to share their input.

"The president invited faculty and staff to the meetings as a way to keep them informed of the continuing budget challenges while at the same time reminding and updating them on the initiatives and strategic priorities of the university over the course of the next several years," Hollingshead said. "The president is looking forward to hearing questions and comments from employees throughout the system during these meetings."
In his e-mail, Forsee told staff and faculty he looks forward to the discussions that will be held at the town hall meetings and wants faculty, staff and administrators to plan on attending.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU considering to start degree programs in South Korea

By Ben Wieder
November 13, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — **MU is in talks with South Korean government agencies to offer at least one degree program through a new university in their country.**

The South Korean government is planning an English-intensive university in Songdo International City, which is part of South Korea's Incheon Free Economic Zone, and officials from South Korea have been in touch with MU to design at least one degree program, MU Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said.

Several English-speaking universities would offer degree programs at the Songdo Global University Campus, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported in June, and students would be granted degrees from the original institution. A student enrolled in a MU program in South Korea, for example, would receive a degree from MU.

MU is completing a proposal for a planning grant from South Korea. If approved, the university would receive about $1 million to design a program for the new South Korean campus, Middleton said.

Middleton and several deans are negotiating the details, but he said he is fairly certain the proposal will be successful when submitted. They have not yet decided which academic programs MU would offer, but departments at MU would have a say about whether to participate.

"No one is going to make anyone do anything," Middleton said.

MU would join the State University of New York at Stony Brook and North Carolina State University, which have already received planning grants.
MU has met twice with these universities and three others – George Mason University, Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Delaware – to discuss their potential involvement in the Songdo Global University Campus, said Brent Lindquist, deputy provost at Stony Brook.

A third meeting is scheduled for early December.

Stony Brook was the first university to complete its grant proposal and received $1 million in planning funds in December 2008.

Expenses thus far include:

- Hiring a consulting company to determine SUNY systemwide human resources' policies for employees working abroad
- Legal fees for local representation in Korea
- The hiring of a full-time liaison for talks with officials in South Korea

It plans to offer four undergraduate engineering programs, along with graduate business and technology management programs. Additionally, Lindquist said it would need to offer the same English language support programs it now offers many foreign students on the Stony Brook campus.

Lindquist said these programs would ultimately accommodate 1,500 to 2,000 students, which would require between 80 and 100 faculty members.

Middleton said MU faculty in the affiliated departments could be asked to teach in Songdo for a semester or two.

Stony Brook's experience at its branch campus in Southampton, N.Y., has convinced Lindquist of the importance of a committed, full-time faculty.

"To make a branch campus successful, you have to have a cadre of faculty who are loyal to the branch campus," he said.

He hopes that some of Stony Brook's current faculty will be attracted by research possibilities in South Korea and consider moving to Songdo.
Individual departments will be responsible for "quality control" to ensure that academic offerings in Songdo are the equal of American equivalents, Lindquist said.

Middleton said assuring the quality of MU's potential offerings is essential.

"We won't do this if there is any compromise in the product," he said.

Middleton said MU will also try to negotiate opportunities for interested MU students to study abroad in South Korea.

But the most important factor determining MU and Stony Brook's ultimate involvement in the Songdo Global University Campus is economic.

Lindquist said the South Korean government will need to increase its proposed financial commitment to the project for Stony Brook to go forward with its degree programs.

"We cannot put a dollar of New York state money into this," Lindquist said.

MU, Stony Brook and other potential institutions reserve the right to decline participation in the project, even if their grant and degree proposals are approved by South Korea.

"If the bottom line is not positive for us, we won't do it," Middleton said.
USDA grant expands an MU Extension program

By Catherine O'Neill

November 12, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA - MU Extension was an early leader in farmer education courses. Now, a grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is helping expand education for beginning farmers.

A $730,000 grant will fund an expansion of the Grow Your Farm program and other beginning farming services in the state. MU, Lincoln University and the Jefferson Agricultural Institute are partnering in the three-year project.

“We're seeing an increasing number of people trying to get into agriculture from a nonfarming background,” said Rob Myers, director of programs at the Jefferson Institute. “They need some good, solid assistance.”

The program will reach farmers who have less than 10 years of experience as well as those farming with limited resources. From 2008 to 2009, MU Extension's Grow Your Farm program included a series of eight weekly seminars and three farm tours.

With the additional funds, trained Extension agents will teach the program across the state, primarily in four targeted regions of Missouri. The closest Grow Your Farm program is located in Callaway County.

Registration for the program usually costs $200, but a recent grant through the USDA will offer the winter program to members of the Columbia Farmers' Market at a discounted price*. Those interested in the winter session can register until Monday.

“Our goal is to help the farmers put together a business plan so that they can do a better job of not just growing their vegetables, but how to look at their profitability as well,” said Jim Jarman, an agronomist and the contact for the Callaway County program.
The locations and registration information for existing courses are listed on the MU Extension Web site. Prospective Central Missouri participants can also contact Jarman, for registration information.

The Grow Your Farm program focuses mainly on business management skills and successful strategies for planning a farm, Myers said. With increased funding, the program will offer a second tier of training courses and workshops. According to the grant proposal, the courses will center on small acreage farmers interested in sustainability and direct marketing, such as selling at farmers’ markets.

“Participants will be given a choice of topics and can then select which workshops are most relevant to their situation,” Myers said.

These topics include developing fruits, vegetables, specialty grains and small livestock as well as honing basic farm equipment skills, Myers said.

The Jefferson Farm, an educational farm on New Haven Road, will host some of the workshops. The grant will provide new funding that will help overcome some of the challenges the institute faced in the recession, Myers said.

"We had a shortage of funds because of reduced donations from foundations and other sources," Myers said.

The grant will also fund the development of online networking tools for beginning farmers.

"If you have somebody in Kansas City who wants to grow two acres of vegetables, there are other vegetable growers near K.C. who can help," Myers said. "It's a way to help make sure people are linked to people doing similar things."

Myers said he is developing Internet tools to help farmers market their produce online.

The fourth component of the program is based on a class already offered at MU. The Return to the Farm course started as an Extension project in the 1980s as a reaction to the farm financial crisis, said Kevin Moore, who teaches the class.

It is now a course in agricultural economics, and students learn business planning and management required for operating a successful farm — including transferring farm
assets, acquiring farmland and developing credit. The grant will sponsor the development and statewide distribution of training modules based on this course, according to the project narrative.

"You can no longer just be a successful producer to be a successful farmer," Moore said. "You have to be a successful businessperson as well."

While Moore has witnessed numerous success stories in the course's history, he is looking forward to the grant's increased impact. Once a universal curriculum is developed, all participating institutions will be trained in the course. Moore aims to begin the training in 2011. Until then, MU students can enroll in the course.

"This will help us reach those kinds of farms that you know probably aren't as commonly represented by the students who come to MU," Moore said. "It's all really exciting."

The public will have access to the program through a page for beginning farmers on the MU Extension Web site. Myers plans to have the Web site, which will list all the courses and workshops, completed by January or February.
Coal Free Mizzou rallies at Speakers Circle

Students want to speed up support for a coal-free campus.

By Megan Donohue  
Published Nov. 13, 2009

A crowd of Coal Free Mizzou members and supporters in bright yellow shirts carrying signs and props gathered Wednesday in Speakers Circle for a rally and a march.

The rally was held not only to iterate the group's goal of transitioning the university from coal, but also to tell people the campaign has the full support of Chancellor Brady Deaton, as the group found out at a meeting with him Tuesday, Sustain Mizzou Campaign Co-chairwoman Melissa Vatterott said.

"We discussed with the chancellor the importance we felt for Mizzou to transition off of coal because of the many harmful effects to the environment and our health," Vatterott said. "He was in complete agreement and encouraged us to pursue working with the Sustainability office as well as people with the environmental affairs."

With Deaton's full support, the group will try to gather the sustainability organizations on campus together to form a plan for the university to transition to a sustainable energy source, Coal Free Mizzou Faculty Coordinator Paul Rolfe said.

"They actually agreed to send a letter to the leaders of those groups saying 'we would be involved' and we would be pushing with them to get a plan to move beyond coal," Rolfe said.

The petitions and personal letters the group gathered were a great help in gaining Deaton's support, he said.

"I think those actually showed a lot of student support," Rolfe said. "Right now we have over 1,300 petitions and over 100 letters from students."

Vatterott said she is still not quite satisfied with how things are going.

"We still feel that we should move at a faster pace than the university already is because we feel that it is a very urgent issue for us to address in order for us to be sustainable, as it is one of the goals at the university," Vatterott said.

All this was discussed at the rally, where Vatterott, Sustain Mizzou Campaign Co-chairwoman Mallory Schillinger and finally Larry Brown, a faculty member from the geography department and the group's new faculty adviser, spoke before leading the group in a march to the power plant.

"I think it went really well," Vatterott said. "The energy was great, everyone was happy to be there. I feel that a lot of people saw what we were doing and it was just another way for us to get the word out there to the students of Mizzou that coal is not sustainable and Mizzou can be a leader in transitioning to alternative energy."
Although Vatterott and Schillinger focused on the group's goal and the newly gained support of the chancellor, Brown discussed coal's history at MU, its overall harmfulness and MU's ability to move beyond it.

"The problem with coal is we don't think about it," Brown said in his speech. "We are not carrying around a lump of coal. We are not sticking a lump of coal in our pocket. We are not necessarily holding a lump of coal up to our face to breathe. But in all those ways that's how coal works in our society."

Brown also highlighted on moving the mining of coal from near campus to Wyoming, West Virginia and Kentucky.

"We stopped harvesting coal here and moved it far away," Brown said. "We're not seeing the dust clouds, we're not necessarily breathing it, but it is here, and as much as we use coal on this university campus, we perpetuate that same dirty history that went on before."

Brown ended by summing up the group's hope MU will act more quickly to transition off of coal.

"We need to continually let the university know that they can move faster and more completely," Brown said. "We can get beyond it, we can go through the withdrawal processes, go into the social therapy that we need to get off our coal addiction and find something else that in the long run is far more helpful to our life, to the ecology of the planet and also in terms of our economy."
Open column
November 12, 2007

**MU should work to eliminate use of coal**

Thursday, November 12, 2009

*Editor, the Tribune:* It’s great that we have our own power plant. Not many campuses can say that or have that much control over their power consumption. We have the control to say what we use or burn in our power plants.

Since we have our own power plant, we have the ability to choose what we use. It was crazy for me to recently find out that the University of Missouri uses 80 percent coal in the plant to provide our energy.

Coal is very hard on not only our environment, but the health of the people living in the surrounding area. By eliminating the use of coal on campus, we could lessen the amount of toxic waste we emit into the environment.

We can cut down on power needs by employing aggressive energy-efficiency and conservation programs and save money while doing it, such as the $4.6 million that Energy Management has saved annually from conservation efforts here at Mizzou. The university is in the process of completing a biomass boiler, which will reduce our amount of coal consumption by up to 5 percent.

Though the university is working toward improving our energy efficiency, we can do more and hopefully eliminate coal consumption.

Erin Richeson

3001 S. Providence Road
On Thursday, Jarvis Tyner, the executive vice chairman of the Communist Party USA, was on campus promoting communism and explaining his beliefs. In 1976, Tyner ran as the vice presidential candidate on the Communist ticket.

Earlier this year, socialist and fellow radical Angela Davis was also here promoting her extremist views.

Students, especially freshmen, the next time you talk to your parents, tell them part of your tuition has paid for bringing a high-ranking communist to campus, as well as a socialist who believes in abolishing the prison system and was a former Black Panther wanted by the FBI.

There are two words to describe what will be the most common response: shock and outrage.

Either the Department of Student Activities or the Organization Resource Group brought each of these speakers to campus. Let's not forget other liberal figures that have come to campus recently, such as Dustin Lance Black, the director of the film, "Milk," who came to speak about gay rights.

This is all well and good, except for there have not been nearly as many conservative voices brought in to balance these far-left voices.

For this reason, I'm here to accuse MU of having an agenda and a left-wing bias.

It's troubling organizations with such big influences on our campus could act so blatantly to ignore the views and beliefs of a large chunk of the student body.

Guess what, Student Activities? Guess what, ORG? To some people on this campus, capitalism and conservatism are the unknown alternative. Shouldn't someone be brought to campus to try to present those ideas to students who aren't familiar with them?

But don't hold your breath waiting for them to act on that.

Based on personal experience working in different groups under each of these organizations, it is clear to me that there is a definite goal of indoctrination, and the extremist views of the speakers brought in reflect the same extremist views of those in charge of ORG and the Department of Student Activities.

To some of the people in charge, Tyner is not an extremist. To them, he's just a bit more liberal than they are.

Coming to this realization is sickening, and actively finding and using our money to pay for liberal after extremist liberal is wrong when there is no effort to hide the institutional bias present on our campus.
The biggest problem with bringing a conservative or capitalist speaker to campus is if ORG or Student Activities wanted to bring someone in, they wouldn't even know where to begin, as if anything they hear that isn't in line with their views is dismissed as far-reaching and a small, fringe opinion.

We won't come to that problem, though, as they won't be getting any speakers to come to campus to present the other side.

There is no reason to expect ORG and the Department of Student Activities will do anything beside what they've always done when confronted with conservatism, which is to effectively plug their ears, stomp their feet and scream like a 4-year-old.

Eric Hobbs is a senior at MU and is the MU College Republicans vice chairman. He can be reached at emhn75@mail.mizzou.edu.
University Bookstore unveils textbook rental pilot program

The program will apply to three selected courses but could be expanded.

By Zach Toombs
Published Nov. 13, 2009

University Bookstore will debut a textbook rental pilot program next semester, Student Auxiliary Services spokeswoman Michelle Froese said.

The bookstore signed three rental pilot agreements for Agricultural Economics 3224 and two chemistry courses. Froese said the pilot program will allow students to rent textbooks for the selected courses for five semesters and could be expanded to include other courses in the future.

"Since these are pilots, it remains to be seen if we can make this work from an operational standpoint, but the bookstore is very excited to try," Froese said.

She estimated the rental program for Chemistry 1100's textbook would benefit 875 students who will save $68,750. Although the textbook costs $147, students will be able to rent the book for $57 next semester.

University Bookstore Director Sherry Pollard said the textbook rental program would only work for certain departments and courses.

"We tried to select courses where faculty had used the same book for a long period of time," Pollard said. "Once we made a list of those courses, we went to different departments one by one. These were the first ones to agree."

A textbook rental program at Missouri University of Science and Technology saved students more than $92,000 during three semesters, according to a UM system news release.

"In certain instances, textbook rental programs can provide a cost-savings option for students, provided that the course enrollment is fairly large, the course is consecutively offered and the academic department commits to a minimum of three years to use a specific title," the news release stated. "At large universities, textbook rental can work well with general education classes."

Pollard said the courses offering textbook rental in the spring might only be the beginning for the program but starting with only a few courses is key.

"There are a couple reasons we're starting on a smaller scale," Pollard said. "It's easier to merge with the way we currently do things and it'll be easier to monitor with just a few courses."

University Bookstore plans to use student opinion as one of the main determining factors for expanding the program.

"Starting with a few courses also makes it easier to gauge student feedback and see what the people in these classes think of renting textbooks," Pollard said.
If textbook rental does extend to more courses in future semesters, the bookstore would continue to offer the option of purchasing the textbook rather than renting it, Pollard said.

"We plan to offer rent and purchase options as part of our program," Pollard said. "Even though most students will probably want to benefit from the lower cost of renting books, it is possible that a student may want to keep a chemistry book if they plan on going into that field."

Pollard said the bookstore would gather student feedback on the rental program throughout its first semester to determine whether to offer it for more courses.

"We'll look at the response from students and how well the program can be managed," Pollard said. "Those will be the main things that will help us determine whether or not we'll expand the program."
Editorial:

Textbook rental positive for students

Published Nov. 13, 2009

Textbooks could be significantly cheaper next semester for students in certain chemistry or agricultural economics classes. University Bookstore is piloting a new textbook rental program in three courses.

Students would be able to rent textbooks from the bookstore for a semester rather than having to buy a new book and sell it back for a fraction of the price.

Although there are only three classes involved in the pilot program, it could be expanded to include other classes in later years. The pilot program will last for five semesters, though we hope they will expand it before then.

The program will apply to Agricultural Economics 3224, Chemistry 1100 and 1310, 1320, 1330 — a continuation course.

Approximately 875 students over five semesters will take Chem 1100 and save an estimated $68,750, according to Student Auxiliary Services spokeswoman Michelle Froese. The cost of a new textbook for a class is $147, but students will be able to rent it for $57.

Missouri University of Science and Technology established a rental program in fall 2007. Over the next three semesters, students saved more than $92,000. Throughout the program, 989 students participated, meaning the average student saved $93 per semester. That makes a huge difference in the long run.

When many students are graduating thanks to thousands of dollars in student loans, being able to set aside money for savings rather than having to buy a textbook you might rarely use can make a big impact. Textbooks are ridiculously expensive, so students need all the help they can get when it comes to buying books.

These rental textbooks would cost around one-third of the price of a new textbook, which would be a huge help.

That the textbook rental program only really benefits students and doesn’t profit the university reflects very positively on MU. It’s obvious the plan was put into place with the primary objective of helping students.

We encourage the bookstore to really promote this program and make sure all students applicable for the textbook rentals are aware of it. Unlike the rebate program the bookstore runs, marketing should be widespread.

Once again, we’d encourage the bookstore not to wait until the end of the pilot program to start expanding it. If after two or three semesters it appears to be working, start gradually expanding it. We’ve seen it work well at Missouri S&T. Please do students a favor and give it the chance it deserves to grow and flourish.
Editorial:

Residential Life could make things easier

Published Nov. 13, 2009

In light of the problems with residence hall capacity and placing the ever-increasing number of people who want to live on campus, the Residence Halls Association has proposed a new plan to limit the number of returning students.

Under the new plan, people would be grouped into three separate tiers. There would be a specific number of beds set aside for freshmen, and the rest would be divvied up among everyone else. The first group of people allowed to pick their bed would be those involved in residence halls organizations, such as RHA and hall governments. The next tier would be people who can get a recommendation from their hall coordinators, and then everyone else would be free to pick their beds. Within each tier, it would be organized by seniority — first seniors, then juniors and sophomores. Confused yet?

The plan seems unnecessarily convoluted. First, the proposal is set up for the most senior people in RHA to get their pick of the beds. This seems a little bit suspicious. Plus, the only involvement RHA is counting is that in residence halls. Although we understand the argument RHA wants people who are in residence hall organizations to continue to be able to remain involved, it is still ridiculous. If involvement is going to be a factor, there should be more than residential organizations included.

The biggest problem, though, is the extra red tape this is going to cause just to get a room on campus. The proposal adds several more hoops people have to jump through. For instance, those in the second tier have to get a letter of recommendation from a hall coordinator or student staff. What staff members have the time to write letters of recommendation for hundreds of students who just want a bed on campus for the next school year? This is a completely unrealistic expectation for both students seeking beds and staff.

The problem could be solved in a much simpler way. Set aside the rooms for freshmen and then let people go in order of seniority. This way, no one judges who is more involved than someone else. No one has to request a letter of recommendation to live on campus next year. The freshmen who are required to stay in residence halls will have a place to stay. Everyone wins.

It is also important to note this is not yet set in stone. The Department of Residential Life will have the final say about whether the proposal goes through. It has yet to take a stance on this proposal, but we encourage it to shoot down the tiered system.

In this situation, it best not to complicate things. Follow Occam’s razor. The simplest explanation tends to be the best one.
Trayless trial tests tolerance

Students found making more trips is an inconvenience.

By Luke Udstuen
Published Nov. 13, 2009

A trayless dining trial caused students to reconsider the necessity of plastic trays within dining halls and is scheduled to end Nov. 15.

Students on both sides of the issue were not hesitant to voice their opinions to administration.

"I just came from a meeting with the rest of the operations managers, and they say they have definitely heard it in their dining halls as far as grumbling," Rollins dining hall Manager Nancy Monteer said. "Maybe the first day was yeah, a fun challenge where people were really embracing it. But now that we're into the week, some of the people aren't sure that this is the way they want to go, because they have to juggle plates and those kinds of things."

The trial caused all dining halls to diverge from normal operation.

"We're staffed differently in the dish room for this trayless trial," Monteer said about Rollins.

Monteer said the difference in Rollins is students were previously requested to put all dishes and silverware onto trays when turning them into the tray collection point.

"The most challenging was the silverware because it would fall and get underneath the belt and cause the belt to jam up," Monteer said.

Because Campus Dining Services staff was repositioned to prepare for the different protocol, trays were not needed in Rollins for dish collection.

"We have damage in the past at the bend, so we've positioned someone at the bend to catch things so they don't cause damage," Monteer said.

A few students were extremely against trayless dining.

"Give me my trays back," sophomore Alexandra Bennett said. "I'm very anti-trayless dining. I can't carry all my crap."

Students didn't think the logic of less food being consumed was sound.

"There's more trips, with the same amount of food," freshman Robert Wolfe said. "It hasn't deterred me (in getting less food). It's just harder to get the food that I need."

The difficulty in carrying many different plates did not outweigh the difficulty of washing trays, Bennett said.
"I always get a salad, an entrée, and a drink," Bennett said. "There's no possible way to carry that in one trip. It makes it very untimely. It's just difficult to make three trips in one meal."

Freshman Michelle Markelz said the lack of trays caused her to be hungry.

"In my experience today, I've found that not having a tray causes me to go back for more food twice or even three times," Markelz said. "So, effectively, it didn't help me reduce the food I took."

For the most part, student discontent has been quelled. Some say it wouldn't be staved for long if trayless were permanently implemented.

"The first day, when they saw there were no trays, there were a lot of F bombs going on, and a lot of discontent," Wolfe said. "People have stopped caring because they know they're getting trays back next week. But if you told them they were loosing their trays for good, there would probably be a petition going around against it."