When the Wife Brings Home the Bacon

Researcher Says Female Breadwinners Have Control and Independence, But Guilt, Too

OPINION By LEE DYE

Nov. 25, 2009—

What happens when the wife becomes the breadwinner and Dad is left home to take care of the kids and clean the house?

The woman will probably feel like she is more in control and independent, but she will likely worry a lot and feel immense pressure, along with some guilt and resentment.

And the house probably won't be as clean as it was when Dad brought home the bacon.

That's the finding in a new study out of the University of Missouri which looks at the impact on the life of a wife who suddenly finds herself the breadwinner.

That's happening more and more these days. In nearly a third of U.S. families, the wife is now the primary or sole breadwinner, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the number is growing.

Research Looks at the Working Wife

There have been many studies of the male side of that equation, but very few researchers have looked into the impact on the working wife, according to Rebecca Meisenbach, an assistant professor of communication at the University of Missouri, and author of a study in the current issue of the journal Sex Roles.

When she first started searching for wives to participate in the study, she discovered that most female breadwinners felt somewhat alone, seemingly unaware that many others share their fate.

"They felt isolated in that role," Meisenbach said in a telephone interview.
She finally rounded up 15 female breadwinners in 10 states and conducted lengthy interviews, and then re-interviewed them several times. The women in her study seem to be doing quite well in their unexpected roles, although life at home has become difficult for some of them. And the findings in the study will not apply to all female breadwinners.

The 15 women in the study are "highly ambitious, career driven, and they feel more pressure to perform well at work than when they were single and they weren't the breadwinner," Meisenbach said.

They are also well educated, some even holding doctorate degrees, and their jobs range from business executives to educators. So they may not be typical of female breadwinners, but their observations in Meisenbach's interviews sound pretty much like ordinary folk.

How Are Men Adjusting to Their Working Wives?

While some wives are gaining fulfillment on the job, there is considerable documentation that men, accustomed to being the masters of their domains, are not adjusting as well to handing the reins over to women. Some studies have found, for example, that most husbands of working wives actually reduce their effort to take care of the house.

Meisenbach sought to find issues that confronted all of the participants. She found six predominant "themes," and the women spoke candidly about such things as control, independence, stress, their partner's contributions, guilt and career advancement.

Control

"I've gotten this (desire) from my father," said a participant identified only as Jan. "He definitely instilled in my sister and I the notion of being control freaks."

But it's one thing to be in control at work, and another to being in control in the home. Several women said their husbands resented any effort to urge them to expand their household duties and fill in the gaps left by the absence of the wife.

"I just have to ask because, I mean, he's a man, and they don't see that there's a mess," observed a woman identified as Emma.

"My husband's a guy," added Carrie. "He picks and chooses what chores he does." Carrie, like several others, said she still does most of the housework, even though she's also the breadwinner.

Independence

"I'm just very, very independent," said Gail. "I can't imagine being dependant. I know how to turn on the dependency and make it look like I'm dependent if I need something, you know, but that's a marriage thing." Several women emphasized the importance of their financial independence.
"If something happened in the relationship or, God forbid, that, you know, he was killed or something like that, I know I could take care of myself," said Lisa.

**Pressure, Stress, Worry**

"It's a stressor," said Rachel of the pressure in being financially responsible for the family.

"I get a little antsy sometimes, especially not being tenured yet," said Lisa, a secondary school teacher. "You know, the bag lady syndrome. What would happen if I lost my job?"

**Pressure on Women Different From Pressure on Men**

Meisenbach pointed out in one of the interviews that generations of men have felt that same pressure, so is it any different for a woman?

"Definitely," said Emma. "Because there's not that guilt that's added on by your friends that go, 'Oh, you're working, well, what are you going to do about the baby?'"

Elaine noted that leaving the husband at home with the kids can lead to "the mommy guilt complex."

And, of course, she also has to keep her mind on the job.

"It's an immense amount of pressure on me to be a very high performer at work so that I can, with 100 percent certainty, maintain either my employment here or my employability at the same level in another organization," said Diana, a human resources consultant. "It's an immense amount of pressure ... and it dissuades me from going out and finding a job that probably would suit my passions more because my passion lies in areas that don't pay.

**Valuing Partners' Contributions**

The women clearly struggle to convince their husbands that they contribute much, even if it isn't monetary.

Jan said that when her husband complains that he's not doing enough, just taking care of the homestead, she reminds him of her own domestic shortcomings.

"'Are you kidding me,' she told him. "I regularly grew mold on my dishes in the sink. I've thrown away a lotta dishes 'cause I couldn't even stand to clean them."

**Guilt**

Emma probably spoke for many when she said:
"I've just felt this overwhelming sense of guilt like, am I less of a mother, am I less of a woman, less of a wife for wanting to pursue this career and, you know, wanting to have this family? Am I selfish for wanting to have this?"

These are upper middle-class breadwinners, seemingly doing well, but conflicted, nonetheless. But they are less likely than many others to worry about the bottom line.

"It's not, is there going to be food on the table?" Meisenbach said.
Missouri athletics returning $1.5 million annual subsidy

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA | Growing profits from college athletics could mean more money for the rest of the University of Missouri's cash-strapped Columbia campus.

The school's Athletics Department will gradually return its annual $1.5 million subsidy for construction projects debt to the overall campus budget over the next several years.

NCAA research shows Missouri among just 25 major college sports programs to turn a profit in the 2008 fiscal year. Tiger athletics generated $1.4 million in profit that year, and $2 million in the 2009 fiscal year.

An NCAA survey of the 119 Football Bowl Subdivision schools shows that public universities reported a median value of $3.31 million in annual support directly from their institution.

"We're trying to show we are willing to support the university's mission," said Missouri athletics spokesman Chad Moller. "If we need to tighten up the belt and take a hit for the greater good of the university, then so be it."

The financial success of Missouri sports — primarily driven by a once-woeful football program that now ranks as a perennial power — comes as university system President Gary Forsee warns of upcoming budget woes of a "once-in-a-generation magnitude."

Forsee and Gov. Jay Nixon hope to keep tuition rates flat for a second consecutive year. But in return, they expect cuts in state support of at least 5 percent to 10 percent.

"We're happy to be able to move this way in a time when the university so desperately needs the revenue," said Brady Deaton, chancellor of the flagship Columbia campus.

The campus has contributed $1.5 million annually toward athletics' debt service since 1997, when university curators approved construction of the Dan Devine Pavilion, an indoor football practice facility.

The current subsidy has grown to $2.25 million a year, said Tim Hickman, senior associate athletics director. As the department grows flush, the hope is to rescind even more of that subsidy — and perhaps even contribute money toward the academic side, he said.

"Everything is still under discussion," Hickman said.

In the current fiscal year, the athletics subsidy for debt service has been cut to $1.25 million. That support will shrink to $750,000 in fiscal year 2011 and then be eliminated by fiscal year 2012.

Moller said the revamped funding structure should reduce the "misconception" among the general public that Missouri athletics is heavily dependent on the rest of the university — and by extension, taxpayers — for its revenue, which approaches $50 million annually.

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http://www.kansascity.com
MU, KU researchers join in schools study

By Janese Heavin

Saturday, November 28, 2009

University of Missouri researchers are teaming up with their Kansas counterparts to help K-12 school districts better understand what affects student achievement.

With the help of an $800,000 grant from the Kauffman Foundation, the Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium will analyze state and district achievement data to compare performance between schools, districts and the two states.

The consortium includes researchers from the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City who will work with more than 30 school districts in the Kansas City area. "What's powerful about this, No. 1, is that the questions will come from the schools," said Jay Scribner, chairman of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in MU's College of Education. "We're basically taking the lead from school districts. It's not necessarily university or researcher driven."

Some of schools, for instance, might want to know what happens to students after they graduate from high school, why some students who transfer to new schools perform better than others or how specific curricula are working in one district compared to another.

Even though Columbia Public Schools isn't involved in the project, some of the findings could benefit all districts. Because they're controlling for variation, such as a school's socioeconomic or racial makeup, researchers can pinpoint exactly which factors — such as class size or teacher qualifications — affect student performance.

"That's a powerful lens," said Mike Podgursky, an economics professor at MU. "We can determine the effectiveness of anything: teachers, curricula, schools. We can really see where growth is occurring and isn't occurring and work with districts to learn more about why that's the case."

Unlike Missouri Assessment Program results, the work goes beyond a year's worth of test-score averages. Researchers will be looking at annual growth among individual students, schools and districts since 2006, when the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education began tracking individual students.

"Both Missouri and Kansas have created very in-depth, longitudinal data sets that school districts can use to evaluate outcomes," said Donna Ginther, a KU economics professor and director of the Center of Economic and Business Analysis. "The problem is with the current economic
conditions, nobody has the resources to actually make good use of these data at the moment. This is something we can help our school partners do,” she said.

And by working with individual districts, researchers can go beyond that data as well to “get a picture of what’s really happening,” Ginther said. “Data is a huge part of it, but I don’t think it’s the whole story.”

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The Tribune's View

Cap-and-trade

Bad for MU, et al

By Henry J. Waters III

Sunday, November 29, 2009

The cap-and-trade system for reducing carbon dioxide emissions is more popular in Washington than Jefferson City. In Missouri, more dependent than most states on coal-fired electricity, cap-and-trade is bound to stir opposition.

Count the Columbia campus of the University of Missouri among the threatened entities, at least according to UM system President Gary Forsee, who recently sent word to Missouri’s congressional delegation urging defeat of the bill.

Cap-and-trade has passed the U.S. House of Representatives and earlier this month passed the Senate Environment Committee. The Senate should drag feet.

The plan would cap greenhouse gas emissions for fossil fuel users. Those exceeding the limits would have to pay penalties. Those below could sell or stockpile credits. Missouri and MU are destined to be buyers, costing millions for MU, according to campus calculations.

Cap-and-trade would cause a big increase in overall energy cost to the United States, particularly in places where the most efficient fuel is used. Coal has every advantage except for emissions quality, which has been steadily improved in recent years. The threat from greenhouse gas is a controversial matter. No doubt it’s worth concern, but proposed corrections with serious adverse economic impact deserve second-guessing.

Moreover, the United States can’t solve the world’s alleged climate problems even with the most aggressive plans, such as cap-and-trade. Already we have done more to mitigate air pollution than most other industrialized nations. A much better approach would be wholesale expansion of nuclear energy generation, which would mitigate the effects of coal in a positive way, enabling an excellent production system with positive long-term implications.

A theoretical satisfying argument can be made for cap-and-trade; its disincentive will cause polluters to quit fouling the air, making CO2 trading unnecessary. Even if this happens, it only will be at a cost approaching cap-and-trade.
Particularly now, when the economy is weak, is no time to add such a serious burden with such a questionable purpose. Quite a few believers contend the purpose is beyond question, but skepticism is substantial. On the eve of the big energy conference in Copenhagen, where hundreds of nations will discuss what do to about the climate, is no time for us to walk the plank alone.

HJW III
MU uncorks a new subject: Wine making
By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

With the University of Missouri's entry into the wine making business, will the lexicon of tasting expand a tad?

The cork is sniffed by the connoisseur. "More than a bit acidic, I believe, like a hungover philosophy professor."

His drinking companion rolls the liquid over his tongue and nods.

"Masculine as a hairy-as-a-bear senior linebacker."

He hits the spittoon.

"Finish is ragged, too, about that of a six-year-old econ text."

Note to the readers: No grapes, sadly, were harmed in the making of this story. The scene above is imaginary and in no way reflects on the drinkability of the wines being discussed in this story — the ones made on the Columbia campus and about to be sold to a select few.

Wine has been of interest at the University of Missouri for many, many years.

Now, you can actually get credit hours for it — making it, that is.

Which is exactly what Steve Monson is doing as a graduate student at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. He and a classmate run the MU winery in Eckles Hall and keep careful eye on the fermenting 85 gallons of red cabernet, white chardonnay and Riesling in the three climate-controlled storage chambers.

"Every day, I have monitored every single one of those tanks by hand," Monson said. "If you work in the field, you understand it. You love it."

"It's mentally and physically hard; 90 percent of wine making is cleaning the crushers, the hoses, the tanks.

"But you definitely understand why wine is not grape juice. You understand that it is a balance between what you want and what nature tells you you can do. Making wine is an art, and it is really sexy."

MU took its first steps into the world of wine making a little more than three years ago when the Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture & Enology (wine making) moved to Columbia and opened a lab.

This fall, the research on Missouri soil and climate and their effects on the grapes has gotten to the stage that the wines made in the process will be sold.

The grapes come from two university-owned vineyards in New Franklin and Mount Vernon, as well as private stock grown at wineries in Rocheport, Boonville and Hermann.

Perhaps the bottle label should be "Room 135," the place in the agriculture building where Professor Bacchus rules. Dominating it is the stainless steel drum — capacity, 1,000 pounds of fruit — for stemming and pulping grapes and extracting the juices.

No underclassmen stomping fruit, just shiny machines.

About a dozen students and faculty viticulturists, however, do each day pull frozen grapes from a packed freezer, squish them by hand in plastic sandwich bags, then put them through a battery of tests searching for levels of acidity and what makes them the juiciest, the sweetest, the best for making wine.
Eventually, professional wine tasters will sniff, then sip the finished product, gauging its marketability — and in a way giving it a grade.

It will be bottled and labeled, said Eli Bergmeier, a viticulture researcher.

"You probably won't see us on store shelves. We are not trying to take a competitive position in the market. We'd probably sell to alumni to recoup costs," he said.

"We are here to serve Missouri's wine industry, not to compete with it."

Ultimately, MU's viticulturists are out to help the state's grape farmers and enologists bump up profits and quality crop yields.

About 90 wineries commercially produce wines in Missouri.

A hundred years ago, before Prohibition, the state was the second-largest wine producer after New York. Times and wines have changed.

"Our goal is to provide an economic engine to drive this rapidly growing industry," said Keith Striegler, who leads the MU viticulture program, which boasts of being premier in the Midwest region.

Grape varieties are tested for adaptation to growing conditions. Experiments even involve the position of the vines hanging on the trestles.

"We are trying to save the growers some time," Bergmeier said. For a grower, a bad crop is lost wage and a waste of time. "For us, a failure is just good information."

Curtis Bourgeois, owner of Les Bourgeois Winery, perched on bluff overhanging the Missouri River in Rocheport, lends MU a section of his vines.

"Better-tasting wine, that's what it is all about," he said.

Bourgeois calls it "a huge plus" to have the institute, lab and winery at MU. He expects its graduates to enhance Missouri's wine industry.

"Before now, we had to import talent from other states," he said. "The more educated the work force, the better the quality of the product."

That's where Monson, product of a small farm east of Columbia, comes in. He recalled when a family friend, an enthusiast, would bring bottles to his parents and describe the vintages' complexities.

Monson didn't pick up the taste right away, but now every time the 21-year-old raises a glass, he drinks knowing the wine has life that is ever-changing.

"I love that it is a good balance between art and science and working with your hands and a complex relationship between the grape grower, the wine maker and the fruit.

"I think the first time I was ever inspired by a bottle of wine, I was working with the Midwest Grape & Wine Conference held at Lake of the Ozarks," Monson said.

The wine maker had taken special care of a vineyard as therapy to cope with an ailing family member.

Monson sipped the wine, a Norton type.

"You could taste the love put into it," he said. "I had never tasted anything like it. It had such a complex and deep flavor."

It's that passion the professors want their students to master, not just wine making techniques, Bergmeier said.

"Wine has a mystique," Bergmeier said. "It draws people together."

To reach Mará Rose Williams, call 816-234-4419 or send e-mail to mdwilliams@kcstar.com
"I just got through reading in your Sunday morning paper about the MU salaries. It’s ridiculous that some of them make that kind of money and the raises. They got employees doing the work and scared to death they’re going to be the next one to be laid off. Something’s not working over there. I say take some of those hefty raises and give it to the employees.”

“You know, the paper ran this big exposé on all these salaries at the University of Missouri; however, they failed to mention how these salaries compare to the other people in the Big 12. We have a great university here and a lot of good things going, but just to run this stuff to get people going on about stuff — I think we would probably rank next to last in the salaries at the University of Missouri.”

Robertson replies: Reporter Janese Heavin did not compare MU salaries specifically with Big 12 schools, but she did report in the Sunday article that MU salaries rank third from the bottom in comparison with 17 peer institutions in states surrounding Missouri.”
It’s time to recycle used nuclear fuel

Proven practice also lessens stored waste.

BY WILLIAM H. MILLER

MU mention page 2

Sunday, November 29, 2009

America’s nuclear power plants are performing with record efficiency, but efficiency alone can’t overcome a remaining obstacle in the nuclear business — the treatment of used nuclear fuel as waste. Now is the time to revive recycling of used fuel in the United States and start reaping its benefits.

Not only does used nuclear fuel contain large quantities of valuable nuclear materials that can be recycled for further use in producing electricity, but squeezing more energy out of used fuel would be good for the nation’s economy and environment.

True, not every last bit of used fuel can be recycled. But more than 95 percent of it can, leaving less than 5 percent to decay away in a few centuries. We can use our technology — already known — to obtain further use of the uranium and plutonium remaining in this fuel to help us reach goals for greenhouse-gas reductions while harnessing its energy content to generate more electricity for American homes and businesses.

Currently the United States has more than 60,000 metric tons of used fuel in storage at nuclear plant sites, including 610 metric tons at the Callaway Nuclear Plant in Mid-Missouri. This resource is wasted because three decades ago President Jimmy Carter banned the use of nuclear recycling on the grounds it could lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It doesn’t, and other countries know better. France and Great Britain recycle used fuel, and no plutonium has ever been diverted from French or British recycling facilities for weapons production.

Instead of being chemically reprocessed to make mixed-oxide fuel that can be used again in a reactor to generate additional electricity, the used fuel at U.S. nuclear plants continues to be stored in engineered water pools and concrete-and-steel casks. If it were recycled, there would be significantly less nuclear waste and global uranium resources would be conserved.

If climate change really is dangerous, the United States needs to increase the use of nuclear power. It is ironic that many environmentalists have so little faith in nuclear energy — and
especially used-fuel recycling — when it has been so effective in reducing air pollution and greenhouse-gas emissions. Here in the United States, nuclear power accounts for more than 70 percent of the nation’s carbon-free electricity.

We know recycling is a proven technology because at least a dozen other countries with nuclear power programs pursue it. France, in particular, has made efficient use of recycling and produces 80 percent of its electricity from nuclear power.

If recycling is feasible, why aren’t we doing the same as those countries? The technology for such reprocessing was developed in the United States. In fact, a facility is being built at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina to recycle surplus plutonium from the nuclear weapons stockpile into mixed-oxide fuel for use in nuclear power plants. Another, similar plant could be built for recycling used fuel from commercial nuclear plants at that facility.

Money remaining in the Nuclear Waste Fund could be made available for that purpose. Nationally, $16.6 billion has been collected since passage of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982. With interest, it has increased to $33.2 billion. And the fund is growing by $800 million annually. Meanwhile, less than $10 billion has been spent on developing a waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. And that project has been discontinued.

It’s time to stop thinking of used fuel as if it’s nuclear waste. Department of Energy officials believe the technology for recycling is known and will continue to get even better.

This is undoubtedly correct, but that’s no reason to continue debating the merits of recycling. Now is the time to get on with it.

**William H. Miller is a professor of nuclear engineering with the University of Missouri’s Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute.**

This article was published on page D3 of the Sunday, November 29, 2009 edition of The Columbia Daily
Analysis: College deal fits with Missouri, federal laws

No MU mention

By CHRIS BLANK/Associated Press Writer
November 29, 2009 | 4:01 p.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — The terms of Gov. Jay Nixon's most recent agreement to block tuition increases at Missouri's colleges and universities were curtailed by state and federal requirements.

Under this year's agreement, Missouri's colleges and universities have promised not to raise tuition for instate students if state officials promised a glancing blow upon their budgets instead of deep cuts.

Specifically, the state's two-year and four-year schools would accept a 5.2 percent budget cut, which adds up to about $50 million. The tuition freeze would be for the 2010-11 school year, and the budget cut would be for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

Without a waiver from federal requirements, the budget cuts could not have gone much deeper. And without permission from the Missouri commissioner of higher education, tuition at many schools is not likely to have increased significantly.

That's because the federal stimulus package limits how much Missouri can cut spending on higher education, and a 2007 state law limits tuition increases to the rate of inflation with a little higher boost for those with tuition below the state average.

The governor estimated this month that Missouri could have cut higher education by as much as $75 million. The inflation rate for determining the maximum tuition has not been calculated, but the Federal Reserve this month projected that consumer prices nationally would increase by around 1 percent.
Nixon, a Democrat, has touted the arrangement, saying it demonstrates Missouri's commitment to higher education and would boost the state's economy. He also has used it to contrast Missouri with California, which has approved a 32 percent fee increase for students attending the state's top public schools.

"It's a very good deal for Missouri families. It's a very good deal for Missouri colleges," Nixon said.

Last year, the governor cut a similarly structured deal: No tuition increases and no budget cuts. That arrangement was bolstered by the same set of laws. The federal stimulus package made cuts to higher education unlikely and inflation was negligible, rising 0.1 percent.

In the tuition deals, one of the benefits for colleges and the state has been more budget certainty.

Higher education officials would get a commitment on how much money they stand to lose with time to plan for it. Nixon, whose campaign last year stressed college affordability, would book a $50 million savings amid ongoing struggles to balance the state's budget.

In return, the schools and the state each leave some money on the table but avoid gambling to free even more funds. The colleges do not need to decide whether to get permission for tuition increases. Missouri officials do not risk their federal stimulus money or have to consider whether to join other states in trying to persuade the federal government to let them make deeper cuts.

The uncertainty with this year's pact is whether the Legislature will go along with the idea.

For the first agreement, lawmakers bought in and eventually praised the idea. But this year, cracks already have developed.

Some lawmakers questioned whether the agreement is too restrictive, limiting the Legislature's budget-cutting options as it struggles to deal with declining state revenue.

One state Senator said he is worried that if the plan is approved state will have to make deeper cuts to other programs.
"I hope this unwise and premature side deal will not force massive cuts on the mentally challenged and children with developmental delays as it gains nothing in return," said Sen. Scott Rupp, R-Wentzville.

And some Republicans have questioned the significance of the agreement, calling it a distraction from college budget cuts. They claim the 2007 law limiting tuition increases has been the greater force in holding down tuition increases.

To the critics of this year's deal, Nixon points to the certainty it offers.

"You've got to really dig pretty deep in your criticism to find a problem with freezing tuition in Missouri, guaranteeing funding for higher education at a level that is affordable for Missourians, providing predictability and providing stability and excellence in our higher education," Nixon said.
Missouri prawns hit dinner plates

By Janese Heavin

Friday, November 27, 2009

Missourians might be able to add a mess of fresh shrimp to the menu at future fish fries.

University of Missouri researchers have spent two years raising and harvesting a type of Southeast Asian prawn in a pond at Bradford Farm. Prawns are a close relative to shrimp, similar in appearance and taste.

“We wanted to see if we could raise them here in Central Missouri, just to kinda get a feel for it,” said Tim Reinbott, supervisor of the Bradford Research and Extension Center.

The center first bought juvenile prawns from a Texas hatchery last summer and continued studying them this year. Because prawns wouldn’t survive the cold months here, shrimp season in Missouri is a short one: They purchased them in June and harvested them in early October.

Reinbott said they’ve learned some things about raising shrimp here. Of course, prawns wouldn’t last long in a pond stocked with catfish or perch, but it turns out a lot of other creatures enjoy eating them, too. Bullfrogs, blue herons and raccoons appear to be the main culprits, Reinbott said.

“They have a lot of predators,” he said. “We put in 4,000 and got back less than half.”

But keep the critters away and ensure they have zooplankton to eat, and prawns thrive here. Reinbott said they grow about 7 inches long and are thicker than shrimp you see in the grocery store.

“Talking to people in the industry in Mississippi and the deep South, we’re wondering if Missouri being a little cooler in the summer, they might actually do better here,” he said.

Missouri-raised prawns are tasty, too, said Eric Cartwright, executive chef of MU Campus Dining. He served them at two residence halls and at Baja Grill in Bingham Commons. Although it took some persuading to get students to sample them, Cartwright said the feedback was positive.

“I think everyone who tried them loved them,” he said.

The prawns have a lobster-like sweetness and aren’t as firm as boiled shrimp, Cartwright said. At one hall, chefs rubbed them in a Cajun dry seasoning and roasted them in the shell. At another
hall, they poached the prawns in butter. And at Baja Grill, chefs soaked them in a lime marinade and charbroiled them.

Because they received the prawns whole, Cartwright said, they also saved the heads and used them to make stock for soups and sauces.

The idea of adding fresh shrimp to her menu intrigued Kim Perry, owner of the Mississippi Fish Shack downtown. “That would be awesome,” she said after learning about the project. “I've had fresh shrimp before, and they’re very good-tasting. I think it would be a good idea if we could get more stuff locally.”

Reinbott said the next step will be to figure out how Missouri landowners could raise prawns, either for their own dinner plates or to supplement their incomes.

“You couldn’t make an entire living off of it, but it could definitely add income,” Reinbott said. “It’s really hard to find fresh products, and this would be a great way to supply them to local restaurants. If we started raising tens of thousands of shrimp, that’s a whole market.”

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