MU gets millions for health study

Effort to put focus on cardio system.

By Janese Heavin

Thursday, May 6, 2010

The University of Missouri has been awarded an $8.47 million grant to study cardiovascular health, one of the largest awards for medical research in MU's history.

"This truly is a milestone," Chancellor Brady Deaton said today at the announcement of the National Institutes of Health grant at the MU School of Medicine.

The five-year, renewable grant will support a collaborative research effort among some 20 scientists at MU who are researching microcirculation. Essentially, the team hopes to figure out how the body's network of the tiniest blood vessels might help doctors predict future health problems such as stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes and non-cardiovascular problems such as Alzheimer's disease.

Using high-tech imaging equipment already on campus, scientists hope detecting minute changes in vessel behavior can be linked to potential diseases. "The basic research question is to understand how the structure of the vascular wall interacts with its function," said Gerald Meininger, program director and director of MU's Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center.

Meininger compared the vascular network to steel beams that support a building. If those beams begin to rust, the entire structure is compromised. Similarly, if these tiny vessels aren't carrying out their proper functions, such as transferring nutrition or removing carbon dioxide from organs and tissues, a person is at risk for an array of illnesses.

Making connections between vessel behavior and diseases could help doctors diagnose problems earlier and lead to better prevention or treatment options, said Ron Korthuis, a project leader and chairman of the Department of Medical Pharmacology and Physiology.

To help answer the question, cardiovascular researchers recruited experts in various colleges and centers on campus, including the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Center for Gender Physiology. Having those groups study different aspects of microcirculation under the helm of one grant should enhance collaboration and communication, Meininger said.

Grant funding will be used in a variety of ways to support the research, from keeping imaging equipment up to speed to hiring technical staff.
"It brings in a whole new source of funding for a new problem," Korthuis said. "It will enhance our research, allowing us to hire more folks and helping us approach the problem more rapidly."

Administrators credited receipt of the grant in part to the university's ability to attract experts in the field of cardiology.

"MU has spent decades developing one of the most productive groups of cardiovascular investigators in the world, with a special emphasis on the emerging field of microcirculation," medical school Dean Robert Churchill said in a prepared statement. "This grant is the latest example of what MU can achieve when scientific talent and resources from across campus come together."

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
MU School of Medicine receives nearly $8.5 million

By Katelyn Amen
May 6, 2010 | 1:11 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An $8.5 million grant will allow scientists at the MU School of Medicine to research the smallest blood vessels in the human body.

The grant comes from the National Institutes of Health and is the third largest in the medical school's history, Dean Robert Churchill said during a news conference Thursday morning.

The grant will fund an $8.47 million research project on microcirculation. Gerald Meininger, principal investigator for the grant, said results of the study will be relevant to hypertension, diabetes and stroke research. It also relates to heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the nation.

Ronald Korthuis, chair of the Department of Medical Pharmacology and Physiology, agreed. "This work has the potential to reach across a vast array of different disorders."

The blood vessels to be studied are thinner than a human hair and have walls that can be as thin as a single cell, according to a news release from the School of Medicine. They transfer gases, nutrition and hormones throughout the body and remove wastes from organs and tissues. The function of these vessels determines the health of the cardiovascular system.

Meininger said the grant will allow scientists to investigate the internal protein structure of these blood vessels. Vascular diseases affect this structure early on, so a better understanding of vessel structure will allow for a better understanding of disease.

The MU researchers spent five years planning and two years putting together the proposal in order to get the grant.

Korthuis said MU has one of the largest collections of microcirculation scientists in the world, recruiting seven additional researchers to work with the grant. The project will involve more than 20 scientists from across campus, according to the release.

MU has received more than $30 million in grants from National Institutes of Health since 1994, Churchill said. The Department of Medical Pharmacology and Physiology ranks 12th in the nation in terms of research grant funding.
MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said the grant has helped transform MU into a competitive institution for cardiovascular research regarding high-resolution image analysis in microcirculation.

"We are the leaders in this respect," he said.
COLUMBIA – On Wednesday nontenure track faculty at MU will have something they haven’t had before – representation on the MU Faculty Council.

Nontenure track faculty, who until now were missing representation on campus committees, will have access to electronic ballots to elect three representatives in teaching, research and professional programs to the council.

Similar elections were held a few years ago, Faculty Council Chairwoman Leona Rubin said, but representatives stopped attending council meetings and the positions just disappeared. New avenues for contacting faculty members, such as the recently implemented faculty listserv, will hopefully prevent history from repeating itself, she said.

"There are people on the nontenure track who have been here for 20 years," Rubin said. "They are certainly invested in and affected by the decisions made at this university, so I think they need to have appropriate representation."

Rubin said nontenure track faculty Jason Aubrey, business mathematics coordinator, and Nicole Monnier, assistant teaching professor of Russian, jump-started the process by asking to sit in on council meetings.

"They wanted to understand the expectations of holding a council seat so they could communicate them to their faculty," she said.

In addition to missing representation on the faculty council, Rubin said, nontenure track faculty were not able to serve on campus committees until this year. Of the 150 faculty volunteers this year, 54 were nontenure track faculty, she said.

Of the roughly 2,600 faculty at MU, Rubin said approximately 600 are ranked nontenure track faculty. According to Rubin, the designation of “ranked” faculty stems from job title – anyone with the word “professor” in his or her title is a ranked faculty member.

Nontenure track faculty are still not able to vote at faculty meetings, a fact Rubin hopes to address in the future despite the difficulty to implement such a vote.
"I would love for them to have full representation, but that would require a change to the collected rules," she said.

Also at the meeting, Rubin reported that MU is anticipating its largest freshman class on record for fall 2010, with 6,036 students expected (an increase of 461 from last fall). She said all colleges throughout the university saw an increase in applications except the Trulaske College of Business and the School of Journalism. She also said that graduate applications increased, as did those from African-American, Hispanic and transfer students.
List of local commencement exercises
FROM STAFF REPORTS
Friday, May 07 2010

Local college and university commencements get under way this evening and will continue through the middle of the month.

Making appearances at various campuses in Missouri and Illinois will be a host of politicians, authors, broadcasters and notable graduates. Here's a look at some of the key events and highlights of the upcoming graduation season:

— Southern Illinois University Edwardsville will have one of the earliest commencements, with ceremonies starting tonight and ending Saturday. Some 1,800 students are eligible to graduate.

— The University of Missouri-St. Louis will start its graduation ceremonies on May 15 and will end with the College of Business Administration on May 16 at 6 p.m. Among the highlights, the College of Arts & Sciences ceremony will feature keynote speeches by a trio of students.

— The University of Missouri-Columbia will turn out more than 5,500 graduates during the weekend of May 14-16 with more than a dozen ceremonies. Speakers will include Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond and CBS news correspondent Bill Geist.

— St. Louis University's commencement ceremony will be May 15 at Chaifetz Arena, though individual schools and colleges will have a series of ceremonies on May 13-14.

— Washington University, which will see about 2,700 graduate, features perhaps the biggest name this year, with U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu giving the 149th commencement speech to students gathered on the Brookings Quadrangle on the main campus on May 21 at 8:30 a.m.

— The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is breaking its 139th commencement into two ceremonies on May 16. Speaking at both events is Timothy P. Shriver, chairman and chief executive officer of Special Olympics International.

— Best-selling mystery writer Rita Mae Brown will speak at William Woods University in Fulton, Mo., on Saturday morning. Brown's latest novel "Cat of the Century" is set on the campus.
Harris-Stowe State University's ceremony on Tuesday will feature John Silvanus Wilson, the new executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Webster University will feature Lt. Col. Greg Gadson — a Webster alum — at Saturday morning's ceremony at the Muny in Forest Park. Gadson is an Army veteran who lost both legs in 2007 while serving in Iraq.
Michael Knight steps down as associate band director

Associate band director Michael Knight takes position in Wisconsin.

By Megan Donohue
Published May 7, 2010

Michael Knight announced he would be stepping down as associate director of bands at MU at the end of May to assume a position as director of bands and head of instrumental music education at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis.

As a result, the 2010 Mizzou Band Camp for junior high and high school students is cancelled.

The search for Knight's replacement will go public this week, School of Music Director Robert Shay said.

"I've been aware of his interest in seeking a different kind of position for a little while," Shay said.

It's not unusual for people to shift their focus to concert bands at some point in their careers, because working with large athletic bands like Marching Mizzou is very time consuming, Shay said.

"I know that Knight is excited about his new position, which will allow him to change gears somewhat and focus on his interests in concert bands and music education," Shay said in a letter to the School of Music.

Many of the students in the MU band programs are sad to see Knight leave, senior music education major Erik Dancy said.

"The man is a great teacher, and I was devastated a little bit to hear that he was leaving, even though I am graduating," Dancy said. "He left a legacy here that nobody is going to forget, so it's tough to see him go."

Although the Mizzou Band Camp is a good way to recruit prospective members for the bands, the cancellation of this year's camp shouldn't be a serious loss, Dancy said.

"I don't think it will be a significant deal, but I do think it will be important," Dancy said. "This is the one opportunity that students get to be on campus and get to play in the band with one of the conductors for the university."

Senior music education major Grace LaRose, who attended the Mizzou Band Camp when she was in junior high and was also a camp counselor, said the kids who would attend the camp will suffer the greatest disadvantage from its cancellation for several reasons.
"I think it acts as just a great experience for the kids, but it also acts as a recruiting tool because a lot of kids see the way our program works and they get to know some of the faculty, and they think about coming here," LaRose said.

The university won't be losing any money from the cancellation of the Mizzou Band Camp this year, Shay said.

"We generally don't make much money off of those camps," Shay said. "We do it more for a kind of outreach. Our enrollments were not that high yet, so we didn't feel like we'd be losing too much to cancel."

With the search for a replacement going public this week, applications should start coming in next week, and a choice should be made in a few weeks time, Shay said.

"He was a really great director, but I'm sure we'll find someone who could do the job well," LaRose said. "I don't think we're going to get worse or anything."

Even if the MU bands don't visibly suffer next year, they will definitely be affected in a big way, Dancy said.

"The man is brilliant, and again is an excellent teacher and a great leader, and he's really professional and he teaches you to be professional, so I think that losing him to any university is going to affect the people next year," Dancy said.
Two University of Missouri student teams snagged trips to California and China after spending the past five months developing new technologies for media giant Hearst Corp.

The teams beat out three other finalists in the third annual Reynolds Journalism Institute student competition. The competition links journalism and computer science students to create new media technologies. This year, students used Adobe software and, for the first time in the contest’s history, included Hearst as a corporate partner.

“This is the place we wanted to be,” said Mike McKean, director of the RJI Futures Lab. “We’re not only experimenting with technology but also applying it to real-world problems.”

Teams worked with Hearst mentors to come up with products aimed at solving company and industry problems. Five finalist teams presented their ideas yesterday, but with minimal detail. Hearst owns the rights to the creations, and students were required to keep projects confidential.

This year, Hearst chose two ideas the company believes will help solve pressing needs, said Beth Polish, senior vice president of Hearst’s corporate innovation program. The first winning team this year — made up of students Esten Hurtle, Ryan Martin, Justin Myers and Allan Vestal — created an interactive consumer recommendation engine that Polish said should help media outlets better connect with and engage readers.

The second winning project — designed by students Akshay Dave, Brent Davidson, Adam Falk, Daniel Maxson and Amit Vyawahare — allows media websites to merge advertising into multimedia features such as photo slide shows.

“We were so impressed by all of the students,” Polish said, adding that Hearst representatives found MU students to be not only intelligent but also professional.

RJI this year also partnered with Fudan University in Shanghai, and students there competed in a similar contest. Next month, members of all of the winning teams will meet in California. The two universities also will participate in an exchange program, allowing MU winners to visit Shanghai and Fudan students to come to Columbia.
Although students agreed to waive rights to their work to Hearst this year, future student inventors might not have to worry about the UM System staking claim to their ideas, thanks in part to the 2009 RJI contest.

Students last year were challenged to come up with new iPhone applications, and the winning team created an interactive real estate program known as NearBuy. University administrators at first thought the system had some rights to the invention but ultimately relinquished rights to the student inventors.

UM rules spell out how income is split between the university and professors who come up with marketable ideas, but it wasn’t clear to what extent those guidelines applied to students.

Mike Nichols, vice president of research and economic development, said in a video message at RJI yesterday that he plans to propose a change in the rules to the UM Board of Curators next month.

The change would make it clear that students own the rights to ideas they come up with in class or for a university-approved contest or activity, as long as they don’t use university resources above and beyond what students normally use.

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MU police to conduct alcohol saturation

By Katelyn Amen
May 6, 2010 | 4:16 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — More MU police will be on foot, bike and vehicle patrol this weekend looking for open containers of alcohol, minors in possession and other alcohol violations.

Officers will focus on Francis Quadrangle, Greektown, the campus’s border with downtown and other high pedestrian areas from 9 p.m. Friday through 3 a.m. Saturday.

A grant from the Missouri Department of Transportation Highway Safety Division is funding the saturation, which is geared toward youth alcohol consumption.

"It just allows us to put additional resources out to focus on a specific issue," MU Police Capt. Brian Weimer said. He said at least four additional officers will be patrolling for open container and minor in possession violations.

Law enforcement around the city, county and state is making an effort to up DWI enforcement this weekend, using money from the Transportation Department.

"We are coinciding with that," MU Police Capt. Brian Weimer said. "We will be assisting them with some of their activities, too."

The Transportation Department pays for five saturation patrols each year that coincide with holiday weekends or other special events. Transportation Department grant specialist Chris Luebbert said the dates are chosen because they typically have a lot of social activity that can involve drinking.

"The purpose of these is to deter people," he said. "Just to let the public know, please don't drink and drive."

The MU Police Department applied for the grant in August and received $12,500 for alcohol enforcement all year, Luebbert said. The money covers the cost of overtime.
MUPD, CPD increasing alcohol law enforcement

By Lyndsie Manusos
Published May 7, 2010

This weekend, the MU Police Department and other agencies are participating in events to patrol and enforce alcohol violations.

MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said the department will be conducting a youth alcohol saturation late Friday to early Saturday morning. According to an MUPD news release, additional officers on foot, bike and vehicle patrol will focus on open container, minor in possession and other related alcohol violations. Primary areas of focus will be high pedestrian areas, such as the Francis Quadrangle, Greek Town and areas bordering downtown.

The saturation will be funded by a grant from the Missouri Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Division. The department's grants recommend certain dates to hold these events, said Weimer.

"We have funding left in that grant, so we went ahead and are doing of these youth saturations," Weimer said.

Weimer also said the city and county departments' participation in similar events will help put out a strong message.

"The city and county are both doing a different type of activity so we're just trying to coincide with them," Weimer said.

The Columbia Police Department is participating in the "You Drink & Drive, You Lose" campaign that began Wednesday and will go through Sunday, a CPD news release stated. Enforcement efforts for this campaign include a checkpoint at an unnamed location in the city. Times for the checkpoint will go from about 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., the news release stated.

"It's never worth the risk to drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol," CPD officer Chris Hessenflow said.

Hessenflow is a part of CPD's DWI Unit.

CPD expects results from the checkpoint to be posted Monday, the news release stated. The checkpoint and increased enforcement will also be funded by a grant from MoDOT's Division of Highway Safety.
Veterans give back to college students

MSVA aims to help veterans transition from soldiers to students.

By Kaylen Ralph
Published May 7, 2010

The Missouri Student Veterans Association hosted Operation Free Lunch on Tuesday at Lowry Mall. The event was an attempt by veterans to give back to MU students.

Students waited in long lines for the entirety of the five-hour event to get their barbecue treats, MSVA Communications Officer Nicholas Khan said.

Khan said the event, a first for the organization, was a success, and similar events are in the works for the future.

"We're going to start rapidly changing our direction and have more events purely for social interaction between us and other students," Khan said.

Daniel Sewell, who was president of MSVA for the past two years, said he thinks the organization is at a better level of recognizable campus presence than it ever has been before.

"Ever since I've been involved, we've been able to elevate veterans issues to a recognizable level," Sewell said. "I don't think we have a problem on this campus."

Sewell said aside from being a recognizable student organization campus-wide, other student veterans groups in Missouri and across the U.S. have looked to MU as an example of how to expand and improve what they have to offer veterans returning from the war.

"I really think MU has set the bar, I guess I can use a military term, they've gone above and beyond the call of duty," Sewell said. "A lot of other campuses, not only around Missouri but throughout the United States, have really taken note of our success and the things that the university has done. When guys and girls come back from the war front, there are some issues that need to be addressed, and MU does a good job of it."

Sewell said such issues span from administrative issues to setting up a Veterans Center and Veterans class modeled after a similar class offered through the Student Success Center.

Khan said the event was a good way to let MU students know the veterans are here and to build mutual respect between the two groups. Khan said it can be difficult for student veterans to come back to school after serving active duty. He has been in the U.S. Air Force eight years and is at MU to major in either biology or chemistry.

"The whole goal of the MSVA is to provide the resources veterans need to integrate socially and academically with each other," Khan said. "We want to help make the transition from soldier to
student as seamless as possible. A couple of years ago, before we had the MSVA, we had a lot of trouble. We're still a little geared toward military, which isn't the normal college student's state of mind."

Operation Free Lunch ended Tuesday when the veterans serving the food ran out of supplies. Senior Adam Stillman said he was especially appreciative of the free food because he had not yet eaten lunch.

"It's really nice of them," Stillman said. "It can't be cheap to provide free food for all these people."

Khan said a lot more events aimed at integrating the veterans and other students are in the works for the future. Sewell said this summer is an important time for increasing membership in an organization that has gone from having six to 90 members in four years as veterans return to Columbia in preparation to start school.

"It's our first opportunity to see new veterans on campus before school starts," Sewell said.
MU intellectual property policy might change

The policy gives MU rights to student, faculty and staff inventions.

By Ethan Simonds
Published May 7, 2010

Revisions might be made to MU’s intellectual property policy due to recent discussions on the topic.

Under the guidelines in section 100.20 of the patent and copyright law of MU’s collected rules and regulations, if an employee of the university applies for a patent on an invention, the university takes the rights to that invention.

It goes on to define employees as not only paid faculty and staff, but also "students and graduate assistants, with or without monetary compensation, working on any project under the direction and control of the university."

The term "invention" applies to either the completed idea or the actual physical element of the invention, whichever occurs first.

Chris Kelly, director of the office of technology management and industry relations at MU, said the process gives due credit to the students or faculty who does the inventing. The inventors get a third of the revenue from their inventions.

"That share is distributed before any expenses are taken out of gross revenue," Kelly said. "Because of the open nature of universities and academia and the opinions of researchers, all universities have similar types of distribution models where the inventor gets a sizable portion of the revenue."

The business world is constantly changing and progressing, Kelly said. The universities' policies in all matters, including intellectual property, should reflect that.

"It's one of those things we need to constantly take a look at," Kelly said. "Business changes over time, so we want to be on the forefront of the modern business methods and the meeting of their needs."

The university, the UM system and the inventors each get an equal share of the revenue from the invention.

"We can use our portion to file patents and cover costs and complete the process," Kelly said. "When we license a company to use the technology, we try to get them to reimburse those patent costs."

Josh Smith, a senior at MU, doesn't think the policy is fair.
"From what I understand, the school has intellectual property rights to projects done by students in the classroom," he said. "You should be able to take your idea and profit from it."

Smith doesn't agree with the university classification of students as employees.

"Professors are the employees of the school," Smith said. "When you work for a company, you make a product, and it belongs to the company. As students, we're more like customers. It doesn't seem like the school should take ownership when we're paying to be here."

Kelly said the policy has been amended a number of times throughout the years.

"It's not something you change very easily, but we need to constantly manage it," Kelly said.
Students push for law school improvements

The Academic Affairs committee will discuss ideas for improvement with law school students.

By Angela Case
Published May 7, 2010

The Missouri Students Association is taking steps to address the School of Law's recent fall in U.S. News & World Report rankings.

MSA Academic Affairs Chairman Everett Bruer said improving the law school is one of his highest priorities. He said he would begin the process by talking with MSA's law school representative, representatives from the Graduate Professional Council and law students. Bruer, a pre-law student, also said he will focus on improving not only MU's law school, but also its pre-law program.

Tracy Gonzalez, assistant dean in the law school, said she has met with five different student groups in the last month to discuss plans for improvement. Gonzalez said Law School Dean Lawrence Dessem has also met with student leaders to receive input from students and maintain open lines of communication between the administration and the student body.

Bruer said he doesn't have any concrete plans for improving the law and pre-law programs but hopes to meet with people regarding the issue before summer break. He said the break would give him some time to collect and consider ideas from students.

Bruer said presentation is an important part of improving the public's perception of a school.

"The journalism school is very visible," he said. "I'd like to get the pre-law program to be the same way."

Bruer also said many students consider different schools' specializations when choosing a law school. He said the law school is nationally recognized for its criminal defense program and he wants to help the school improve that program.

"It's better to be good at one thing than a jack of all trades," he said.

Bruer said national rankings, such as those provided by U.S. News & World Report, can be misleading because they compare schools with different specialties.

"Students want to go to the place that suits them best," he said.

Gonzalez said the law school reviews its procedures every year, regardless of its rankings. This year's review process is underway.
Gonzalez, who is the dean for admissions, career development and student services, said her department has been discussing new programming approaches for several months.

"We realized fairly quickly with the change in the economy we would have to take more proactive measures to be innovative in helping students find placement," she said. "We are working on several new programs to assist students in formulating what we hope will be successful job search strategies."

Bruer said his goal is to make MU's school the best law school in Missouri.

"It's not so much about being nationally ranked, though that would be nice," he said.
Angel’ investors bless Newsy.com

By DAVE HELLING

Jim Spencer says he’s got a business model in mind for his video website, Newsy.com.

“Thirty years ago Ted Turner saw this new platform called cable, and he said, ‘I’m going to do Cable News Network,’” said Spencer, president of Newsy.com. “Two to three years from now, when someone says ‘mobile video news,’ if Newsy is one of two or three brands that pop into your mind, we’ve done our job.”

The Newsy.com website, the first offering from Columbia-based Media Convergence Group, this week got a boost toward Spencer’s goal when it announced raising $2 million from “angel” investors. Spencer said the cash would be used to “grow our news operations.”

But he admitted that Newsy.com is not really in the news-gathering business. Instead, Newsy.com features videos and reporting taken from original-content providers such as CNN, CBS, local TV stations and print outlets. Website employees edit the content, write and anchor wrap-around commentary, then post their summary videos, usually between two and three minutes in length.

Newsy.com does not pay for original reporting content it uses, relying instead on a part of copyright law known as “fair use” for the material.

“We’re trying to build a news service that functions in this new ecosystem,” he said, adding: “We don’t do any original reporting.”

But the website will have to be careful to avoid copyright infringement, said Dave Rein, an intellectual property attorney.

“They’re only taking a little bit from this one … something over there,” he said after watching Newsy.com videos. “They’re certainly paying attention to how much they’re taking. … But I think some content providers might get nervous.”

The site offers links to the original sources through transcripts posted near each video, benefiting the content originators, Spencer said.

“We haven’t had any problem at all,” he said. “Where we think people are going to get in trouble are people who just copy stuff and put it on YouTube. … We’re an analyzer.”
Spencer said he moved the company to Columbia almost two years ago because it was the home of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, where he earned a graduate degree.

"Missouri is to journalism what Stanford is to computer science," he said.

The university was given some stock in the company, and some Newsy.com employees teach at the journalism school. Students help compile and edit some website content. Most website on-camera talent works for the company.

Newsy.com also faces uncertainty over the popularity of video news online. While overall use of video has exploded on the Web in the last two years, news organizations have seen mixed results from traditional news-oriented video offerings.

Many Web viewers, it seems, prefer swimming rabbits, stupid criminals and entertainment shows to video news stories that resemble what they see on broadcast TV.

"It's still in the Wild West," Spencer said, but "I think we have as good sense as anyone" about what will bring viewers in.

He said his company hopes to turn a profit by selling ads and subscriptions to his service.
Lack of funding slows progress for diversity initiative

The group has hosted dialogues to promote awareness of diversity.

By Kaylen Ralph
Published May 7, 2010

Since its inception five years ago, the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative has made grassroots efforts to increase diversity at MU. But with minimal funds, expired grants, a small staff and few concrete numbers with which to gauge success rates, the initiative's effectiveness has yet to be determined.

The Chancellor's Diversity Initiative was created in December 2004, but CDI Office Director Noor Azizan-Gardner said it was not until 2007 that the office created by the initiative started functioning effectively.

Azizan-Gardner oversees the programming and professional development sector of the initiative and works on an almost non-existent budget. She runs the department herself with the help of two graduate students.

"In terms of programming and professional development, we were able to deliver a lot with very little money," Azizan-Gardner said. "Soon we will have to grow because of the demand, and I'm one person with two graduate students working with me to deliver programs and training. It is apparent to us, that with the increasing demand, that in the years to come we will have to hire more people."

In regard to programming, the CDI sponsors two main series: You in Mizzou, which is facilitated and shaped by students, and Difficult Dialogues, a faculty development program aimed at increasing diversity in the classroom. Additionally, Azizan-Gardner's office gives free diversity training seminars to various campus groups as well as $250 or $500 to various entities on campus that want to sponsor a speaker or program regarding diversity. Noor said about 15 such donations have been made to different groups.

You in Mizzou was started by Azizan-Gardner in 2006 and is an off-shoot of the City of Columbia dialogue programs. Azizan-Gardner and her two graduate assistants train MU students to become facilitators of discussion topics such as women in politics and same-sex marriage in Missouri. Azizan-Gardner said students suggest the topics, and the promise of free pizza and soda has increased attendance over the past two years.

The money spent on the pizza and soda is the only cost Azizan-Gardner's sector incurs. A grant from the Ford Foundation funds the Difficult Dialogues programs. MU faculty members apply to be trained as fellows of the Difficult Dialogues program. The grant also funds similar goals in other MU programs in addition to the diversity initiative. According to past Maneater articles, fellows are reimbursed with a one-time $500 stipend for the time spent going through the semester of training programs.
Azizan-Gardner said to become fellows in the faculty development program, faculty must develop their curriculum to show they will institute modules in their respective syllabi regarding diversity and how they're going to actually institute this in their respective classrooms.

MU originally received the grant as a one-time $100,000 amount, but then applied for and received an additional $100,000 the following year. Azizan-Gardner said it was a prestigious honor for MU to receive a Ford Foundation grant.

"It's a very tedious process, finding grant funders," Azizan-Gardner said. "This was a very competitive competition universities applied to and only 27 universities got it in the first round. The second time around, there were only 16. It was a very successful program."

Azizan-Gardner said the office would have to seek new grants to continue with faculty development programs in the future. To date, 68 fellows have been trained at MU, according to the CDI website. Deputy Chancellor Michael Middleton said those faculty who have applied and trained to become fellows are ones who were already looking to implement diversity into their departments and classes.

"People who understand the value of diversity, who have been exposed to diversity, are looking for ways to satisfy their own desire to do something," Middleton said. "The Diversity Initiative gave them a community of like-minded people."

Middleton said with the budget situation, the thought of expanding in any area of the initiative is not possible. He said that when the office was started, specific goals and strategic plans were laid out that haven't been met.

"The budget situation is affecting everything we do," Middleton said. "I'd love to grow the staff and have one resource for programming, but that just can't be done. The idea of expanding anything at this point is ridiculous. The budget is cutting everything. It's not having a direct effect yet, in that we have not had to cut the initiative, but we have certainly not been able to expand it as planned as it was in the early days of the initiative."

Middleton has been around since the inception of the initiative, and said there haven't been many changes on campus he's seen except for the attitudes of those faculty who have participated in Difficult Dialogues. He also said the recent cotton ball incident outside the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center could be interpreted in terms of stagnancy as well as improvement in campus climate.

"It will be a long time before we can say that we've fully diversified our campus, both in student and faculty, in numbers, the demographics and in the attitudes of people," Middleton said. "The recent cotton ball incident is evidence it's not working, but I think our reaction to that incident is evidence the Diversity Initiative is working. People said it was unacceptable."

Middleton said he speculates that instances such as the cotton ball incident could be a potential backlash of the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative.

"Perhaps it was a way to heighten awareness," he said. "We've drawn out the bad actors. The more you talk about and promote diversity, the more you give those opposed to those concepts a target for expressing the opposing view. I worry that there's a backlash."
Despite this concern, Middleton said enrollment of minority students at MU has been increasing for several years. According to the Office of the Registrar, there has been a 21.1 percent increase in undergraduate minority enrollment over the past three years.

But Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Ann Korschgen said in an e-mail minority student enrollment figures have been increasing since before the inception of the CDI.

"We have had significant growth in our underrepresented minority student enrollment since 2002, which predates the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative," she said. "However, I would assume that the attention paid to diversity as a result of the initiative has had a positive impact upon the perceptions that minority students have toward MU and thus could have a positive impact upon their deciding to enroll here."

Korschgen also said the amount of scholarship dollars reserved for minority students has not changed since the scholarships were first adjusted in 1994, when the minority enrollment population was first starting to decline. There has been no research conducted regarding what effect the CDI has had on enrollment, Korschgen said.

Middleton agreed the increased minority enrollment figures were more appropriately attributed to the Diversity of Enrollment Management, not the CDI, but that the initiative has worked hard to improve the environment for students.

"It gives the message to students and parents that we're taking these issues seriously and working on them," he said. "I think the campus as a whole has done a good job of recruiting students of color. We need to do more with retention and success rates, and as we do that, we'll see even greater enrollment. I think the student piece is going along quite well."

Another aim of the initiative is to increase incentives for minority hires. According to a report by the Chronicle of Higher Education tracking the employment rates of minority faculty members, there was a 1 percent increase in the number of minorities employed from 2007 to 2009. Middleton said increasing minority faculty numbers at MU is a difficult process.

"It's a competitive world out there, we're losing as many as we're hiring, often other universities in a better financial situation are able to attract superstars away from us," he said. "I think we're going to see some success next year, so it may be that we've turned corner on that, but we'll have to wait and see."

The Chancellor's Diversity Initiative website lists several student organizations as resources. One of these is the Jewish Student Organization. Freshman and newly elected Jewish Student Organization President Sherman Fabes said based on what he has construed from his year on campus, diversity is not where it should be, but that it's improving.

"I can bring in a quota of certain people of certain racial groups and different ethnicities, but that doesn't mean anything if the conversation isn't there," he said. "The biggest thing is funding the conversation."
Mizzou Advantage awards grants to faculty

More than $900,000 in grants have been awarded for networking and research.

By Zachary Murdock
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Provost Brian Foster announced Tuesday that $900,000 in grants to MU faculty have been awarded under the Mizzou Advantage program. The program, created to increase MU's national visibility, is working to forge connections between faculty members and collaborators both on and off campus.

The Mizzou Advantage program began in 2006 with the Strategic Advantages Task Force, summoned to identify five of the university's most competitive advantages. By focusing on these five initiatives, Mizzou Advantage can increase the stature and impact of MU's educational programs in those five areas.

"The idea was to identify MU's competitive advantages that are uniquely strong and would position MU such that other major universities would be unable to compete successfully," the Mizzou Advantage stated.

According to the plan, the five Mizzou Advantages are One Health, One Medicine, Food for the Future, New Media, Sustainable Energy and Understanding and Managing Disruptive and Transformational Technologies.

The grants approved Tuesday will give the program a foundation, Foster said.

"These are grants to feed the process," Foster said. "They are going to tie together the network in place and create more productive kinds of collaboration."

According to an MU news release, the grant is divided into two types of grants, network proposals and fellow proposals. The money awarded to MU faculty is intended to help create new growth and relationships in each of the five initiative areas. Network proposals involve activities that help build relationships, create new collaborations and deepen MU's presence in each of the five areas.

Fellow proposals are grants that will seed substantive education, research and service as well as enhance MU's existing prominences in the five initiative areas.

"It is important to emphasize that the two request for proposals are complementary, and both are essential foundations for the success of the Mizzou Advantage," the request for proposals stated.

According to the news release, 11 network proposals and 15 fellow proposals were awarded this year representing more than 50 departments and emphasis areas across MU.
Foster discussed the mission of the program as one that will build upon itself over time and promote collaboration between faculty, corporate partners and other organizations on and off campus.

"The question is how do we bring them together to collaborate in a new productive way?" Foster said. "You'd be surprised how many people we bring in to a room that are working on very similar projects and have never even heard of one another."

Over the next several years, the program will expand and MU will no longer need to provide grants, Foster said. With the help of the grants being awarded now, the programs involved will be more competitive to receive grants and contracts as well as gaining faculty recognition.