Missouri campuses tweak lecture recording rules

COLUMBIA, Mo. • A new University of Missouri policy that limits the distribution of recorded lectures now makes it clear that students can share such recordings with classmates.

Interim president Steve Owens released the finalized policy on "academic freedom, course discussion and privacy" for the four-campus university system earlier this month.

The policy emerged in response to an online video posting of a labor studies lecture at the Kansas City campus.

Conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart obtained a leaked copy and edited hours of classroom lectures to suggest that the professor and a classroom colleague advocated union violence.

Faculty objections to a draft proposal led to a clarification that students can still record lectures unless their professors object. The more recent change further spells out how students can share recordings.
UM sets classroom recording policy

By Janese Silvey

University of Missouri students will be able to record classroom lectures under a new policy for all four campuses, but they won’t be allowed to share those recordings with outsiders unless they get permission from everyone on tape.

Interim UM President Steve Owens issued an executive order last week outlining the changes, which come on the heels of fallout over leaked lectures from a labor studies course co-taught at UM-Kansas City and UM-St. Louis earlier this year.

In October, Owens released a draft of the policy that would have made it tough for students to record lectures at all. After vetting the wording with faculty groups, though, administrators relaxed recording restrictions in the final policy.

“I understand that today’s students rely heavily on technology to aid in learning, including capturing audio or video of lectures presented in the classroom,” Owens said in a letter to chancellors at each campus. “This policy in no way attempts to prohibit students’ use of technology, but rather prohibits the unauthorized redistribution outside the classroom of any audio or video recording without the consent of the faculty and students who are recorded.”

Under the new rules, students are allowed to make audio or video recordings of class lectures or activities unless a faculty member prohibits it. They can share recordings with classmates, but those who distribute materials to individuals who aren’t in the class without getting permission first could be violating copyright or privacy laws.

Faculty and students who violate the policy also would be subject to university discipline.

The policy is written in such a way that it does not conflict with policies that relate to students who need to record lectures because of disabilities.

In April, the university came under fire when a recorded lecture from a UM-Kansas City and UM-St. Louis labors studies course was edited and posted on Andrew Breitbart’s Big Government website. The recording made it appear as though instructors Don Giljum and Judy Ancel were advocating for violence, but administrators from both campuses reviewed the material and agreed the snippets were taken out of context.

The goal of the new policy is to make sure students and faculty feel safe airing their opinions in class, Steve Graham, vice president of academic affairs, said in an email.
The UM System has “long protected the academic freedom of faculty as being essential to the learning process,” he said.

“This new policy provides guidelines that similarly protect the sanctity of classroom discussions for students so they feel free to contribute their own thoughts and opinions in a safe learning environment without fear that their personal opinions will be disseminated outside the classroom.”

Owens’ tenure as interim president will end in February when incoming President Tim Wolfe begins work.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
New policy issued for recording classroom lectures for UM System

By Rachel Coward
December 28, 2011 | 7:07 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — A new UM System policy requires students to gain permission before sharing recorded video or audio of classroom lectures and discussions with those outside the classroom.

Interim UM System President Steve Owens issued the policy last week, requiring that students ask faculty and other students who made comment during class for permission before sharing video or audio with anyone outside the classroom.

The policy took effect on Dec. 20 and applies to all four UM campuses.

The issue originated from incidents at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart manipulated classroom videos to make the instructors seem as though they supported violence in labor-management relations, according to an article by Inside Higher Ed.

“I understand that today’s students rely heavily on technology to aid in learning, including capturing audio or video of lectures presented in the classroom,” Owens said in a letter to the four UM chancellors announcing the order.

“This policy in no way attempts to prohibit students’ use of technology but rather prohibits the unauthorized redistribution outside the classroom of any audio or video recordings without the consent of the faculty and students who are recorded,” he wrote.
Leona Rubin, an MU Faculty Council member, said she thinks the policy was created in the “right spirit of things.”

“It’s really about giving students and faculty that sense of security that you can have an open discussion,” Rubin said. “(Owens) didn’t want a public display of classroom material to inhibit classroom discussion.”

Rubin said that Breitbart inappropriately used classroom material and that the faculty and UM administration want students to know that they can’t share classroom discussions with third parties, like Breitbart did, without permission.

Not all UM faculty members agree.

Charles Davis, associate professor of journalism studies, described the incidents at UMKC and UMSL as a “spectacular one-time event that’s extraordinarily unlikely to repeat itself.”

“From a First Amendment standpoint, I’m troubled by the policy that tell students who pay tuition to attend that university that they can’t capture video from the classroom that you’re in as students,” Davis said. “I don’t know how you do that with a straight face.”

Davis said many students have recording devices, such as smartphones, with high-definition video capabilities, making the policy difficult to enforce, especially in large lecture classes.

“We’re in an era of lots and lots of sharing and capturing of video content and repurposing that content in interesting ways,” Davis said. “To squelch that seems to be the wrong approach. I think we ought to be open and transparent and share like mad.”

Clyde Bentley, associate professor in the MU School of Journalism and a member of the Faculty Council, said he sees the policy as a compromise.

“There is also a need for freedom of information,” Bentley said. “What we worked on is to balance the two.”

He said there have been previous drafts of this policy and the final order is an improvement.
He said he appreciated Owens’ flexibility in creating the final policy. The president gave the document to the council to examine, listened to the council’s complaints and made changes based on its recommendations, he said.

Bentley said being able to revise the policy restored some of his faith in the UM System.

“Even though it was an executive order, it was a due process,” he said. “That’s what we want in this country.”

According to a previous Columbia Missourian article, instructors would have the ability to warn students up front about “disciplinary actions for unauthorized use of classroom materials or comments” in the class syllabus.

For Davis, that means leaving the door open for sharing information.

Davis said he plans to make it “abundantly clear” that his classes are an open forum and that students in his classes are allowed to share information in any way they want.
MU offers mental 'first aid' training

By Janese Silvey

University of Missouri faculty and staff will get a crash course in mental health issues next week, training aimed to help them better recognize and respond to signs of potential problems.

The Mental Health First Aid program will provide 12-hour courses to teach participants how to assess and respond to certain situations.

“It’s very much like Red Cross first aid except it’s for student health warning signs and symptoms for a variety of mental health concerns,” said Christy Hutton, a psychologist and coordinator of outreach and communications for the MU Counseling Center.

Mental Health First Aid was created 10 years ago in Australia. The program has been replicated in more than a dozen countries. The Missouri Department of Mental Health has worked with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare to bring the program to the United States. In addition to college campuses, the program is available for use among community organizations and faith-based groups.

Nearly 160 faculty and staff members are signed up to take one of the two 12-hour training sessions. Participants will be introduced to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems and learn that mental illnesses, just like physical illnesses, are treatable, said Sharon Thomas-Parks, CEO of Abacus Behavioral Consulting and a course trainer.

Suicide is a leading cause of death among students, according to the American College Health Association, which estimates 28 percent to 37 percent of students seriously consider it. Of those who die by suicide, 80 percent had not sought counseling.

That is why it is key for faculty and staff to recognize warning signs, Hutton said.

“They are the folks who interact with students every day,” she said. “If they have a student who for the first three quarters of the semester gets their work done on time and attends class and then suddenly their attendance drops or their work quality drops, they might be the first person who might be aware of that.”

Faculty should have the skills to be comfortable talking to those students or directing them to counseling services, she said.
Staff in MU’s Department of Residential Life underwent the training this summer. Hutton said she has heard from participants who said they have felt more comfortable understanding what to do when they see situations arise.

“I’ve gotten a ton of positive feedback,” she said.

The course is free for participants, with the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies providing funding for materials and trainers.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Dear Mr. Wolfe...

By Janese Silvey

An open letter to new UM President Tim Wolfe:

I know you’re getting a lot of advice from a lot of folks these days.

Here’s what they’re not telling you (or if they are, it’s probably embedded in a lot of jargon some refer to as “university speak”). As you might find out when I start stalking you, I’m not a fan of jargon. So here’s the gist in good, old-fashioned Missourian speak.

*Gov. Jay Nixon is not your friend.

Oh, sure, he’ll keep state paperwork in black and gold folders and sign legislation with MU-themed ink pens and publicly opine on Mizzou athletics.

And he’ll talk a lot about how he wants all young Missourians to have a chance to go to college — something you probably agree with.

Thing is, he doesn’t want the state or families to have to pay for that great education he wants universities to provide more students.

Which is fine and dandy until Lafferre Hall starts to crumble, and instructors begin to complain about growing class sizes and faculty members realize they can make more money at public institutions in most other states.

But Nixon knows rural Missouri. While it’s not necessarily the case in Columbia, most Missourians aren’t going to pitch a fit when he slashes higher education funding. There are a lot of residents skeptical of universities — they think university administrators are overpaid eggheads. Some fear professors are out-of-touch liberals, and most don’t understand the importance of general research (more on those later).
So cuts to higher education aren’t as politically dangerous as, say, cuts to K-12 or social services.

Now Nixon wants you to loan him money, which people who are in the know will oppose. Some Missourians might think it’s a grand idea, though, especially if Nixon gives them the impression the university is sitting on a giant pile of cash that can be used to keep tuition costs down.

Your board and administrators will probably tell you to play along with Nixon. After all, if you piss him off, he’s known to withhold funding lawmakers attempted to give you.

Or, you could stand up to him by trying to educate more Missourians about higher education (that’s where working with reporters will help).

See, it happened once. After he first took office, Nixon tried to cut funding to MU Extension, the one aspect of the university that rural Missourians get because they see Extension services in their own communities. The public outcry forced him to soften the cut.

Perhaps if Missourians better understood the academic part of the university, they’d be just as up in arms over cuts to basic higher ed?

*Faculty members are your friends.

Oh, sure, they’re tenured and can say whatever they want about you, but it’s in your best interest to pay attention.

Don’t write professors off as out-of-touch liberals or discount their opinions. The faculty members I know and work with are just as diverse as employees in any other profession. Some are conservative Christians. And those who do lean left are thoughtful professionals who have a big-picture understanding of how things work together.

They don’t shoot from the hip — actually, just the opposite. They see various sides of issues, as was the case with those who said they preferred an academic as president but also agreed that your predecessor did a fine job and are willing to give you a chance.

They’re also your greatest asset. They prepare students. Their reputations and research and publications are keys to MU’s membership in the prestigious AAU (which isn’t afraid to kick members out, by the way).

And faculty members conduct basic research, which turns out to be pretty important.

*Understand research

It’s really easy to laugh at some research. Who the heck cares what makes jellyfish glow?

But understanding basic phenomena in nature can eventually have practical and helpful applications, as with the jellyfish protein discovered in the 1960s.
It’s hard to convey to the general public why this stuff matters. Your own board members have questioned some university studies. It’s not always easy to see or explain why something so basic matters to humankind.

So I suggest you spend some time with Provost Brian Foster and Vice Chancellor of Research Rob Duncan, both of whom are excellent at explaining the importance of research in easy-to-understand terms.

Getting familiar with the concepts behind research will be priceless when you’re sitting in front of lawmakers who want to know why they should care about migration patterns of Hopi Indians — and you’ll sound really smart when you tell them that Hopi Indians didn’t migrate.
Missouri bill would enact punishments for failure to report sexual abuse

Posted on Wed, Dec. 28, 2011

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS | A Missouri senator has proposed legislation that would require anyone who witnesses child sexual abuse to report it to authorities.

Sen. Eric Schmitt told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that his proposed legislation would make failing to report child sex abuse a misdemeanor with a punishment of up to one year in jail and a $1,000 fine.

"This is a very measured approach," said Schmitt, a Glendale Republican. "This doesn't deal with suspected abuse. It is tailored only to actual sexual abuse that is witnessed."

Currently only teachers, physicians, the clergy and members of certain other professions are required to report suspected child abuse under state law.

Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster called for the Legislature to expand the mandatory reporting requirements to all after the controversy this fall at Pennsylvania State University. Several university officials have been criticized for not telling police after another assistant football coach said he saw retired assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky in the showers with a boy. Sandusky is charged with sexually abusing 10 boys over more than a decade. He has denied the allegations and is awaiting trial.

Koster, a Democrat, praised Schmitt for filing the Missouri legislation. Koster said that as of April 2010, laws in 18 states require all citizens to report suspected abuse or neglect of children. The two state officials planned a meeting to discuss the legislation.

"If a citizen walks in on the sexual abuse of a child, his duty as a citizen should be clear. We are all mandatory reporters," Koster said. "When it comes to protecting children, passing the buck should not be an option in our state."

However, opponents contend that the measure might not be needed. Missouri has a child abuse and neglect hotline that anyone can use to report suspected child abuse.
"Those who would see a child being sexually abused and decide not to report it won't be compelled to do so just because of a new state law," said Clark Peters, an assistant professor at the University of Missouri school of social work.

In addition, Peters said expanding the mandatory reporting requirements could create confusion about what must be reported and fuel a rash of cases that must be reviewed. He said that could lead to unwarranted investigations that cause legitimate reports to be overlooked.

"Solutions to rare problems often cause unintended harms, no matter how well-intended," Peters said.
MU aims to turn food waste into fertilizer

BY GEORGINA GUSTIN ggustin@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8195 | Posted: Thursday, December 29, 2011 12:05 am

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The students and faculty who eat at the University of Missouri's Columbia campus dining halls throw tons and tons of food away every year. And Tim Reinbott has a master plan for it.

Reinbott runs the Bradford Research Center, the university's farm, where faculty conduct research on everything from crop pests to fish farming. A couple of years ago, he was talking to Eric Cartwright, who runs the university's dining system, about the massive amounts of food discarded by students and the scraps left over after food is prepared — about a million pounds a year.

"That got us thinking," Reinbott said. "Maybe we can do something with this?"

So Reinbott rounded up other university employees and several students to devise a closed-loop food system — a system that recycles food waste into fertilizer, which in turn is used to grow food.

"We'd been interested in composting and being as green as possible," he said. "And that's how this idea came about that we could do something with this waste — that we could compost the waste, grow the vegetables using the compost, and then the food would go back to the dining halls, in a complete circle, with students involved all the way."

The system, Reinbott believes, is the first of its kind at an American university and could serve as a model for institutions around the country that are trying to become more sustainable. At the same time, he says, students from all schools within the university — from agriculture to engineering — can use the system as a classroom of sorts.

"Every process we have is something students can get involved in," he said. "The more, the better."

COMPOSTING PROCESS

The process starts in the dining hall, where giant "pulpers" process leftovers and scraps into a ground mash. "It's like a garbage disposal on steroids," Cartwright said.

One pulper, recently installed, is a souped-up model that can turn anything, from bones to napkins, into pulp, transforming the waste of a day's scraps into a garbage can full of mash.
From the dining hall, the can is taken to the Bradford center, where it is dumped into a giant hopper with an auger, then left in one of several composting bays at a new composting station, completed in November.

"Basically you just mix it up until you don't see big chunks," explained Barry Barnes, a foreman at the Bradford center. "It looks like congealed vomit."

Then time and heat do the work of breaking down the matter until it becomes a dark, rich organic fertilizer, in about 150 days or so. In the spring, the fertilizer will be mixed into soil in vegetable beds, eliminating the need for nitrogen fertilizer, which is expensive and major source of agricultural pollutants.

The vegetables will then be sold to the university's dining system, helping pay for the composting process.

"We wouldn't supply all of their food, but we can certainly provide quite a bit," Reinbott says. "In the summer, the vegetables could be 100 percent."

Eventually, Reinbott says, the university could have eight or nine pulpers in more dining halls, saving the university thousands of dollars in landfill and hauling costs.

Reinbott, though, has big plans that go beyond the food waste cycle. The dining halls use about 3,000 gallons of cooking oil a year, which Reinbott plans to turn into biodiesel that will fuel the trucks that haul the mash around campus. "That's something that can run the whole system," Reinbott said. "To make biodiesel, you take vegetable oil, and then you get the fats out of it with lye and methanol. What's left is biodiesel, and the byproduct of that is glycerol, and we'll take that and make soap or feed it to animals."

**MARKETING CHALLENGE**

So much compost will eventually be made from the process that the system won't be able to use it. That, Reinbott says, could provide some interesting challenges for business students.

"We're going to wind up producing a lot more compost than we need for our vegetable production," he said. "So that's perfect for our students to figure out how to market it. Maybe we can put it in black and gold bags and call it 'Mizzou Doo'?"

At some point, he said, the university might build a processing plant where the abundance of vegetables grown in the summer can be canned or jarred, then consumed later by students or sold. "We might have our own brand that way," Reinbott said.

While the system is designed to take all the leftovers and do something productive with them, the university also is working to trim the volume of leftovers to begin with.

Cartwright recently took some food left on students' food trays and made a huge buffet out of it, to show them how much good food they waste. He also conducts surveys and tastings to find out
what students like, so they throw less away. The dining halls recently went "trayless" in an effort to keep students from overloading on food they won't eat, and the school also launched an education campaign dubbed "Can The Waste" to draw students' attention to the issue.

All of those efforts are working on trimming down the waste stream by about 15 to 20 percent.

"Some waste you can't do anything about," Cartwright said. "But a lot of this is about creating an awareness."
At the top of Ellis Library, sounds of recorded music serve as reminders of the past

By Abbey Sussell

December 28, 2011 | 2:59 p.m. CST

David Truesdell reshelves items that people returned to the recording center in Ellis Library. About visitors to the center, Truesdell said: "Students who are serious about how the music sounds still come here and students who are specifically told to listen to specific things and/or recordings that we have that are either not available on the Internet or too hard to find" also come to the center.

COLUMBIA — Thirty years ago, scores of students visited the Recorded Sound Studio on the fourth floor of Ellis Library where David Truesdell works.
Students would wait in line to use one of the three listening rooms. Some came to listen for a class assignment; some came just to listen to music. They would choose a record from the studio's collection of 20,000 LPs, close the door on a tiny room – with just a desk and record player – and slip on a pair of headphones.

In this era of iTunes and instant, online listening, Truesdell now sees maybe a couple of professors or students a day.

“Many people of this generation don’t really need to go to the library to find music because they can get it off, what I like to call, the inter-tube,” Truesdell said. “Before, unless you were a person who owned a huge library of music on your own, you would have to go somewhere.”

Students and professors still stop by for class material or to buy a CD or LP from the studio’s ongoing music sale. When the studio is empty, Truesdell cleans or organizes records. He researches reviews of recordings that the studio might purchase. But he is always listening to music, especially 20th century classical.

As they walk through the stacks of books that line the outside of the studio, library-goers might hear the faint sounds of Truesdell’s music. The job is a good fit for him because music has always had a place in his life.

“I remember when my dad got a stereo,” he said. “The store included a handful of LPs with the stereo, and there was one recording by a pianist Earl Wild with the Boston Pops Orchestra playing Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' and 'An American in Paris.' I played it to death.”

Then there was Jenny.

“I was in the seventh grade, and she was my music teacher, just out of college,” Truesdell recalled. “She lived a block and a half away, and I had a crush on her. I would go over to her place all the time and listen to music and dream of her seducing me.”

Truesdell played the clarinet in grade school but said he was too lazy to learn to read music and was kicked out of band.

“Jenny actually had the nerve to tell me, you really don’t have any talent,” he said. “I think my parents blamed her for discouraging me and telling me the truth.”
Jenny did not fall in love with Truesdell, but she helped him fall in love with classical music. He still remembers when they listened to Leonard Bernstein conducting Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 5.

That piece is now part of Truesdell’s personal collection of thousands of CDs and LPs.

“I listen to things I just feel like listening to – I’m not trying to teach myself,” he said. “Sometimes you feel that you are hearing or seeing something that makes you feel like you are in the presence of something that is better than any person could be. It’s almost religious.”

Many records remain mostly untouched in the library studio, Truesdell said. In a back room, there’s a recording of the last performance in 1966 in New York’s old Metropolitan Opera. The record includes a piece of the golden curtain from the opera house.

Even if the way people listen to music is changing, Truesdell said he does not believe the studio will become obsolete.

“I think the need for a place like this has diminished,” he said. “But there are still going to be people who want to hear things sounding more lifelike than they will be able to get by plugging ear buds into a computer.”