COLUMBIA — The Center for the Study of Organizational Change received a $1 million gift to support research.

Seth Allcorn, an associate of the center, pledged the donation.

CSOC director Michael Diamond said the $1 million donation is the largest the center has ever received.

This donation will create a permanent endowment, the Allcorn Doctoral Fellowship, for doctoral students in the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs at MU who are studying organizational change in the workplace, according to a news release. The center is a research facility affiliated with the Truman School of Public Affairs.

Diamond said the fellowship supports doctoral students with research assistantships.

The endowment will allow doctoral students who receive the fellowship to work with research associates in the center. They will do a number of types of research projects on organizational change, which could include field work.

"This is an opportunity for students to learn to do field work, to immerse themselves in the culture of an organization and actually write up their studies in a way that incorporates that," Diamond said.

Nathan Hurst, convergence media manager at the MU News Bureau, said the organizations that would be studied could include public or private businesses and non-profit groups.

"They'll research whatever problem the particular organization is having and make recommendations for improving the efficiency of the organization," Hurst said.
An associate who works closely with the Center for the Study of Organizational Change at the University of Missouri has pledged $1 million to fund doctoral student fellowships.

Seth Allcorn, an author and former vice president at the University of New England, has worked with the center for more than 20 years. CSOC is under the helm of the Truman School of Public Affairs.

Administrators will use the money to establish an endowment to help fund fellowships for students with interest in organizational change, policies and culture.
Can Addictive Behaviors Be Predicted in Preschool?

By Maia Szalavitz

Children's behavior at age 3 offers some surprising clues about their risk of developing addictive behaviors like problem gambling or drug misuse in their 30s, according to data from an ongoing study of nearly 1,000 people in New Zealand.

The research, which has so far tracked participants' psychological, economic and intellectual life course from birth to age 32, involves virtually all of the children born in Dunedin, New Zealand, between April 1972 and March 1973.

The new analysis, which was published in *Psychological Science*, found that children whose temperament was deemed "undercontrolled" at age three were more than twice as likely as well-adjusted kids to have problems with gambling at age 21 and 32. About 10% of the children exhibited this type of temperament at that age, which involves a lack of self control, including rapidly shifting emotions, impulsive and willful behavior and relatively high levels of negative feelings.

The association held true even after controlling for factors like IQ, gender and socioeconomic status. And when these children were assessed as adults, they still rated high on feelings of alienation and continued to express high levels of negative emotion. They also tended to be less conscientious and less socially agreeable than their peers.

Long-term studies like the Dunedin project are critical for sussing out the roots of addiction. A key question that has long plagued addiction researchers is: Do factors like problem drug-taking or gambling lead to impulsive behavior — and depression — or are people who start out feeling low and acting impulsively more vulnerable to getting hooked?

"This can help to tease apart chicken-and-egg-type questions — that is, which came first," says Wendy Slutske, *professor of psychological science at the University of Missouri* and the lead author of the study. "In this case, we have firmly established that undercontrolled temperament comes before any involvement in gambling. This is an important piece of the puzzle in developing a theory of the development of problem gambling."
Howard Shaffer, director of the division on addiction at Harvard Medical School, who specializes in problem gambling and was not associated with the study, described the study as an "important contribution to the field."

"There are few longitudinal studies," Shaffer says, "and, in addition to providing a longitudinal study, this research extends the opportunity to examine predictors downward to a very young age. This research also is important because it begins to clarify the nature of the many important non-gambling variables that contribute to excessive and disordered gambling."

Researchers aren't yet sure why the undercontrolled temperament is linked with addictive behavior. Some people with this temperament may enjoy gambling because it allows them to escape from their elevated levels of negative emotions; others may simply be at higher risk because of their reduced impulse control. Both factors combined would be riskiest of all.

Slutske notes some additional explanations: "One possibility is that there are genetic factors that are related to both low self-control and gambling or problem gambling. Another possibility is that children who are low in emotional and behavioral control tend to associate with other undercontrolled children who introduce them to gambling activities."

Once an individual develops a gambling habit, Slutske says, their low emotional and behavioral control may lead to worse decision-making while gambling, or losing control during a gambling session, which may in turn lead to gambling problems.

Gambling isn't the only addiction risk associated with the undercontrolled temperament. An earlier analysis of the Dunedin population found that children with the most undercontrolled behavior at ages 3 and 5 had more than three times the risk of becoming addicted to multiple drugs as young adults, compared with those who had exhibited the highest levels of self-control.

The findings underline the idea that some people are innately more vulnerable to addictions than others — not because they seek extra pleasure, but because they have a pre-existing excess of negative emotions and an inability to control them.

The research also highlights an often-overlooked truth about addiction: it is not simply the result of exposure to an addictive substance. "This study reminds us that exposure to gambling is insufficient to explain the emergence of gambling disorders. Disordered gambling requires a relationship between gambling and gamblers who have certain characteristics," says Shaffer. "This is not to say that some people absent these traits might not become disordered gamblers or that all people with these characteristics will become disordered gamblers, but there is an important association beginning to emerge from longitudinal research."

Indeed, an earlier longitudinal study in California suggested the same kinds of associations, finding that preschool children who had less impulse control and higher levels of emotional distress were more likely to develop drug problems later. Interestingly, in that study, the healthiest preschoolers were not the ones who ended up abstaining from all drug use — in fact, abstainers showed high anxiety and poor social skills from the start. Instead, the youth who had
the best behavior as preschoolers turned out to use marijuana moderately in adolescence, but did not have difficulty controlling their use.

The New Zealand and California studies add to the increasing scientific evidence that addiction is not the result only of drug use or experience with activities like gambling, but rather that the minority of people who do become addicted overwhelmingly have pre-existing problems. At least half of addicted people have another mental illness, such as depression or an anxiety disorder, and these data suggest that those conditions or the temperaments that predispose people to them are key contributors to the addiction.

This means that treatment for gambling or substance problems cannot focus solely on the addictive behavior. "Clinicians must address the full spectrum of issues that tend to cluster with disordered gambling. It is not enough to focus exclusively on gambling activities. Key player attributes will need attention as well," says Shaffer.

Slutske cautions, however, that it is by no means inevitable that undercontrolled children will develop gambling problems or addictions. "Although it is remarkable that one can predict whether one will develop a gambling problem in adulthood from a 90-minute observational assessment at age 3, it is also important to understand that an undercontrolled 3-year-old is not doomed to become an adult problem gambler," she says. "They are just at increased risk. This means that there were many undercontrolled children — in fact, the majority — who did not have any gambling problems as adults."

Nonetheless, another implication of the research is that targeting self-control — rather than particular substances or activities — might also be an important part of prevention. Interestingly, many undercontrolled children "outgrew" their self-control problems over time, and learned to rein in their impulses as well as their peers who showed earlier mastery.

"I think an important observation about self-control is that it is much less stable than other traits, such as intelligence," says study co-author Avshalom Caspi, professor of neuroscience at Duke University. Noting that a correlation cannot be larger than 1.0 — which in this case refers to a factor in childhood being the same in adulthood 100% of the time — Caspi explains that the stability of IQ from childhood to adulthood is around 0.8, while the stability of personality traits like self-control is far lower, at 0.3.

"This tells us that over the course of life, there is quite a bit of change in self-control, and perhaps that potential for change can be harnessed more deliberately by people," he says.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Spirituality not controlled by one "God spot" in brain, MU researcher finds

By Xiaonan Wang

April 26, 2012 | 1:45 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — How the brain functions in a spiritual experience is controlled by multiple areas, rather than an isolated "God spot," a MU researcher discovered.

A study by Brick Johnstone, professor of health psychology in the School of Health Professions, found that the more frequently a person is involved in religious practices, the more active the frontal lobe of brain becomes. The finding also supports previous studies that associated the activities of the right parietal lobe with a human's feeling about divinity, Johnstone said.

"Certain parts of the brain play more predominant roles, but they all work together to facilitate individuals' spiritual experiences," he said.

Twenty people with an injured right parietal lobe, an area located a few inches above the right ear, were studied, Johnstone said. The researchers found participants who have more significant damages to this part of the brain show more closeness to a higher power.

Johnstone said the right parietal lobe makes people focus on themselves, while the left parietal lobe controls how people focus on others.

"If you hurt the part of the brain that focuses on the self, you focus on things that are beyond the self," Johnstone said. "That's the basic description of self-transcendence."

"The right side of brain has nothing to do with being selfish; it's all about being less focused on yourself when this part gets hurt." Johnstone said.

Johnstone said previous studies on Buddhist monks and Franciscan nuns have found that they showed less activity on the right parietal lobe when they pray and meditate.

"People practice through meditation or prayer about how to become connected to God or the Universe," he said. "They can train the right side of the brain to be less active."
The average age of the participants was 41 and ranged from 18 to 78. A majority of the participants were caucasian, Johnstone said. However, the result is applicable in a general sense, he said.

"Everybody's brain is similar," he said. "It shouldn't matter if you are from United States, Germany, China or the Philippines. You injure that part of the brain, you are likely to become more spiritual."

Johnstone said this research does not support or deny evolutionary theory.

"It's just coming up with a different way to explain the manner in which people become spiritual," he said.

The Rev. Larry Veatch of First Christian Church said it doesn't really matter whether there is a "God spot" or not.

"It seems to be almost the universal part of human experience sensing there is something greater than themselves," Veatch said. "That is the basis of all spirituality whether it's Christian, Buddhist or Hindu."

"We know love exists, do we know there is a love spot in the brain?"

_Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey._
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU will host a symposium on Rwandan genocide

By Nicole Jones
April 26, 2012 | 5:09 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — A symposium on "Genocide in Rwanda: Media, Memory and Denial" continues through Saturday at MU.

Sessions, which are free and open to the public, start at 9 a.m. Friday in room 2206 of the MU Student Center. An invitation-only dinner will follow.

Also open to the public is a keynote address at 7 p.m. on Friday in Ellis Auditorium. Carl Wilkens, a missionary to Rwanda who stayed after Americans were evacuated, is speaking on why he chose to stay.

On Saturday, sessions resume at 10 a.m. in the student center; afternoon events are in Cornell Hall. Step Up! An American Association for Rwandan Women will hold a banquet and silent auction starting at 6 p.m. at the Hampton Inn and Suites, 1225 Fellows Place.

The symposium was scheduled to include a showing Thursday of "Brussels-Kigali," a film based on the trial of Ephrem Nkezabera, who was convicted for his involvement in the genocide.

The different sessions will include speakers including Rwandan ambassador James Kimonyo, a survivor of the 1994 genocide; Isidore Munyakazi, a survivor from Rwanda; and Roméo Dallaire, Canadian senator and head of UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda in 1994.

This event is sponsored by MU's Afro-Romance Institute, the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, the Office of the Vice Provost for International Programs, the Canadian Consulate in Chicago and the Rwandan Embassy in Washington, D.C.

For more information, visit the website for the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
Dems, GOP swap charges in student loan fight

House Speaker John Boehner accused President Barack Obama on Thursday of conduct "beneath the dignity of the White House." The top House Democrat said Boehner considers the health of women "a luxury."

In a measure of the sharp elbows both parties are throwing this election year, note that those words were exchanged over legislation whose basic purpose they say they agree on: preventing interest rates on millions of federal student loans from doubling to 6.8 percent this summer.

Their chief remaining dispute is how to pay for the $5.9 billion cost of keeping those rates low. When it comes to that, each side has in effect taken a political hostage: House Republicans would cut spending from Obama's prized health care overhaul law, Senate Democrats would boost payroll taxes on owners of some private corporations and House Democrats would erase federal subsidies to oil and gas companies.

Thursday's partisan blasts were the latest, vivid example of how lawmakers are missing no chances this election season to portray themselves as seriously addressing voters' concerns about the economy and other issues while accusing the other side of blatantly playing political games.

The rhetoric intensified Thursday, a day before the House was set to vote on a GOP-written bill that would keep current 3.4 percent interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans intact for another year. The measure would be paid for by carving money out of a preventive health fund established by Obama's health care overhaul law — a measure most Democrats consider a prized accomplishment worth fighting for.

Obama spent two days this week barnstorming through three college campuses in North Carolina, Colorado and Iowa, using campaign-style speeches before cheering throngs of students to complain that Republicans are dragging their feet on blocking the interest rate boosts.

By Thursday, Boehner, R-Ohio, had had enough, accusing Obama of using taxpayer money to launch political attacks on Republicans for a problem that GOP lawmakers were already working to address.
"Frankly, I think this is beneath the dignity of the White House," Boehner told reporters. He added, "For the president to make a campaign issue and then to travel to three battleground states and go to three large college campuses on taxpayers money to try to make this some political issue is pathetic. And his campaign ought to be reimbursing the Treasury for the cost of this trip."

Boehner also accused Obama of waging "a fake fight to try to game his own re-election."

White House spokesman Jay Carney defended the travel as an effort to champion an important policy issue. He said by taking a high-profile stand in favor of extending the student loan rate, Obama succeeded in winning Republican support.

"It is eminently obvious that the president was out talking about a policy issue," Carney said. "This is official business. And he did it effectively."

The Pentagon says the Boeing 747 that is usually used as Air Force One costs $179,750 an hour to operate.

Despite the party-line divisions, some members of each party were considering defecting in Friday's vote.

The conservative Heritage Action for America was lobbying Republicans to oppose the GOP bill and let interest rates rise, saying to do otherwise would burden taxpayers. And party leaders were pressuring Democrats to vote against the Republican measure, with some Democrats eager to vote to keep student loan rates low despite the health care cuts.

Obama's budget would protect the 3.4 percent rates for a year. There are 7.4 million low- and middle-income students with subsidized Stafford loans, and the administration says the higher rates would cost each an average $1,000 over the life of the loan.

Minutes before Boehner spoke, he was the focus of attacks by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

She accused Republicans of paying for their student loan bill by raiding women's programs. That plays into a Democratic theme of recent weeks that Republicans are waging a war on women because of their stances on insurance coverage for contraception and other social issues.

The House GOP bill would cut a $17 billion prevention and public health fund whose projects include breast cancer screening, childhood immunizations, research and wellness education. Boehner and other Republicans have called the program a "slush fund," and Congress dipped into it earlier this year to prevent reductions in Medicare reimbursements for doctors.

"It may be a slush fund for him, but it's survival for women," Pelosi told reporters. "That just goes to show you what a luxury he thinks it is to have good health for women."
House Democrats have introduced their own version of the bill, sure to go nowhere in the Republican-dominated chamber, which would freeze student loan interest rates for a year and be paid for by reducing government subsidies to oil and gas companies, a favorite Democratic target.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., plans votes in May on his version of the bill.

It would pay for a one-year extension of the 3.4 percent interest rates by narrowing a tax shelter that lets owners of many privately held corporations who earn at least $250,000 a year avoid paying Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes on large parts of their incomes.

Senate Republicans have said they support keeping the student loan rates low but oppose the payroll tax increase.

Associated Press writers Donna Cassata and Jim Kuhnhenn contributed to this report. House Speaker John Boehner accused President Barack Obama on Thursday of conduct "beneath the dignity of the White House." The top House Democrat said Boehner considers the health of women "a luxury."

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More for Less marches for higher education funding

The Missouri legislature's flat budget for higher education has not been signed by Gov. Nixon.

By Molly Duffy

JEFFERSON CITY - Buses filed in and students filed out, carrying signs covered with phrases like “This is not about tuition” and “MIZ – Please Fund Me.”

With more than 150 students gathered outside the Capitol, More for Less took its final stand Thursday for the semester. The movement has responded to Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposed budget cuts to higher education with a letter-writing campaign, lobbying efforts in Jefferson City and a march.

“You are here to protect higher education funding,” Missouri Students Association President Xavier Billingsley said to students at the march. “Nixon proposed about a 12.5 percent budget cut to higher education, which is about 25 percent (less funding) over these last three years. That’s something serious.”

After the budget was proposed in Nixon’s State of the State address in January, MSA and the Associated Students of the University of Missouri launched a letter-writing campaign that produced more than 6,000 letters to legislators signed by students and staff. Then, More for Less headed to Jefferson City to deliver the letters and speak directly to representatives and senators.

One of those legislators, Sen. Kurt Schafer, R-Columbia, spoke to More for Less on Thursday on the budget’s process. Schafer said the House and Senate passed a budget earlier this week restoring about $106 million in funding to higher education.

“This has been a rough year,” he said. “It’s been a very difficult budget year, but the shining star of this budget, which I had on the floor of the Senate until about four o’clock in the morning the other night when we passed it, was maintaining flat funding for higher education. In this budget, that is a huge, huge win.”

The budget still has items that need to go to conference, but the House and Senate agreed funding for higher education was non-negotiable, Schafer also said.

“It’s done,” he said. “It now goes to the governor.”
With the budget on his desk, Nixon can sign the budget, veto it or withhold funds. Nixon has withheld funding from higher education before, MSA Director of Communications Zach Toombs said.

“There’s some constitutional gray area there,” he said.

The governor’s proposed budget has decreased to a 7.8 percent cut for higher education since January due to Missouri winning a mortgage lawsuit. Of the money won, $40 million was funneled into higher education, but those funds were a one-time fix, Toombs said.

Regardless of Nixon’s decision this year, Rep. Chris Kelly, D-District 24, warned students of continuing threats to higher education funding.

“Funding this year is going to be stable, that’s taken care of, and you know what that is?” he said. “That is a tiny, tiny good thing in a sea of incredibly inappropriate funding.”

Kelly stressed the state’s need to bear responsibility for public education.

“The question you need to ask politicians is, are you for or against tax increases that will change higher education?” he said.

The next step toward maintaining funding for higher education is bringing in more tax revenue, Kelly said. With a higher cigarette tax on the ballot, he urged students to support the increase.

“It will put 250 million more dollars into higher education,” Kelly said. “That’s what we need to be talking about. We don’t need to be talking about whether we can just barely keep our head out of the flood; we need to fix the boat.”

Although Kelly made it clear threats to higher education funding aren’t dead, he and other legislators said students’ advocacy had influenced them.

“I can tell you that your role in the legislative process is making a difference,” Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, said.

After students and legislators spoke about issues outside, More for Less entered the Capitol to talk to the legislators who helped create a budget that would postpone cuts to higher education.

“Our message is a message of thanks,” MSA Chief of Staff Steven Dickherber said.
Hospital Drive to undergo summer reconstruction

By Teresa Klassen
April 26, 2012 | 5:28 p.m. CDT

From May 7 to Sept. 20, Hospital Drive will be closed for construction in four phases. New portions of the road will be constructed (dashed lines) to make the road run straight between Tiger and College avenues. | Rachel Stinebring

COLUMBIA — Hospital Drive on the MU campus has a long summer of construction ahead.

Work will commence May 7 to improve traffic flow and safety conditions on the road, according to a news release by Campus Facilities Communications.

The release included several goals for improvement including:

- Hospital Drive will be widened to ease traffic flow.
- A designated lane will be provided for emergency vehicles.
- Crosswalks will be more clearly defined to improve pedestrian flow.
- The drive will be straightened, leading directly to College Avenue instead of curving to the north.

Safety of the road is a primary concern, Campus Facilities Communications Manager Karlan Seville said.
"Visitors and employees at MU Health Center have expressed an interest in defined crosswalks, so we're making sure that they're clearly defined," she said. Widening the road to include a center lane will also allow emergency vehicles to get through traffic more easily.

"It'll be a better flow of traffic all around," Seville said. The hospital and parking structures on the road will still be accessible from intersecting roads, such as Monk Drive and College Avenue. The road will be reconstructed in phases:

- **Phase I (May 7 to June 12):** Hospital Drive will be closed in front of Maryland Avenue Parking Garage from Tiger Avenue to University Hospital. Part of parking lot CG-1 will be closed as a new section of Hospital Drive is constructed between Virginia Avenue and College Avenue.
- **Phase II (June 13 to July 12):** A section of the road directly in front of the hospital will be closed. A section of the road between the Patient and Visitor Parking Garage and Parking Structure No. 7 will also be closed.
- **Phase III (July 13 to Aug. 2):** A section from the hospital's ambulance exit and Monk Drive will be closed. A section of the existing road between Virginia Avenue and the University Physicians Medical Building parking lot entrance will be permanently closed, as the drive will instead continue between Virginia Avenue and College Avenue in the section constructed during Phase I.
- **Phase IV (Aug. 3 to Sept. 20):** The hospital's circle drive will close while chilled water lines are installed.

The road construction will correspond with the installation of the chilled water lines, which will connect with MU's chilled water loop to upgrade the hospital's air conditioning system. The pipes will be installed at the same time as the road construction so the road does not have to be torn up twice, which would be very expensive, Seville said.

"Since we have to run the piping for that anyway, this is just an opportune time to do that," Seville said. Seville said extra time has been built into the project to accommodate for inclement weather to ensure the construction will be finished before traffic increases with the fall semester.

"The reason that we're starting as early as we are is that we really want to push to meet the deadline," Seville said. "We need all the time we can get, and good weather, too." deadline," Seville said. "We need all the time we can get, and good weather, too."

*Supervising editor is Celia Darrough.*
Do you know where MU gets its coal?


MU gets its coal from Knight Hawk Coal in southern Illinois, about 200 miles from Columbia. That's right, not only are we sending all that revenue out of state, but we're also putting a burden on the communities of southern Illinois who suffer from the pollution and degradation from that coal mining.

With about 80 percent of its electricity generated by the coal-fired power plant on campus, MU is one of the last holdouts in the nation relying on dirty coal on campus. This devastating form of energy production not only threatens the health of students and the community when we burn it on campus, but it has left a legacy of ruin in our neighboring state.

We need to take a much closer look at the true cost of burning coal on campus.

Poverty and health care crisis

Pollution from coal costs our nation $100 billion in health costs each year, according to a report from the Clean Air Task Force. Locally, the stranglehold of Big Coal on coalfield communities has prevented economic diversification and led to mind-boggling levels of poverty and ailing health.

Saline County, Ill., for example, the rich heartland of the Illinois coal industry, ranks 98th out of 102 counties for quality health indicators in that state. Jeff's family has lived and worked in the coal mines for nearly 200 years in Saline County, until their ancestral farm was strip-mined for coal.
Coal mining communities understand first hand that the so-called prosperity from business ventures with MU and its power plant is not just deceptive, but deadly. Southern Illinois has been subjected to the whims of the outside market, absentee landlords and coal companies and the boom-bust cycles that have left the region in poverty with few economic opportunities.

About 4,000 miners are currently employed in Illinois according to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Many coal mining communities are boarded up, coal miners have seen their property values decline and homes lost, schools have been consolidated and closed. At the same time, billions of dollars worth of coal have been mined and trained out of the region. In the meantime, 104,000 miners have died from 1900 to 2005 in our American mines, and more than 250,000 miners have died from black lung, with more than 10,000 of those coming in the past decade.

Coal slurry disaster

Over the past decades, untold millions of gallons of toxic coal slurry — or the coal waste mixed with the water and chemicals used to wash the coal before it's shipped to market — have been injected into honeycombed underground mines or stored in huge reservoirs. This waste has poisoned underground aquifers, waterways, wells and drinking water sources that coal miners, farmers and their families get their water from. Farmers just east of St. Louis, for example, were devastated by typical coal slurry leaks in their watersheds, resulting in shocking cases of cancer and death.

Strip mining

Since their birth in Illinois in the 1850s, strip-mining operations have been similar to a warzone environment. These operations use millions of pounds of explosives to blow up mountains and hills and as a result have wiped out millions of acres of prime farmland and Shawnee forests, and led to the largest forced removal of American citizens since the 1800s. Less than three percent of the devastated land has been returned to productive use.

Longwall mining

Big Coal is also destroying agriculture, as massive longwall mining operations churn up pillars of coal underground, leading to subsidence of the land, damaged fields and irrigation and the forced removal of American farmers who are left to resolve problems on their own with the mining companies.
Black lung disease

Despite the fact that it was first diagnosed in 1831, black lung disease continues to kill on average three coal miners daily. And taxpayers, because of defaults on loans by Big Coal companies, are picking up the tab.

However, opposition to the dirty, dangerous and outdated coal industry is growing on campuses and communities nationwide. Already since the national Campuses Beyond Coal campaign launched, 19 schools from Illinois to Wisconsin have made commitments to stop burning dirty coal on campus.

Does MU want to be ranked at the bottom of educational institutions on one of the most important issues of our time?

The answer for our Columbia community, and our partners in southern Illinois, is a resounding no.

We must act now to move MU beyond coal to real, clean energy solutions that will make us a leader. We can’t delay and continue to put off the consequences of burning coal on out-of-state communities and future generations.

The university’s contract with Knight Hawk Coal expires in 2013. We demand that this contract not be renewed and instead the university makes the switch to cleaner, local energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal and efficiency that will save us money and reduce our pollution.

For the sake of the students and residents of Columbia and the people in communities throughout southern Illinois, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton must make a public commitment to moving off dirty coal immediately.

Taylor Dankmyer, a senior at MU majoring in strategic communication, is vice president of Coal Free Mizzou. Jeff Biggers is an author and educator from southern Illinois. His work includes “Reckoning at Eagle Creek,” “The United States of Appalachia” and the forthcoming "STATE OUT OF THE UNION: Arizona and the Final Showdown Over the American Dream."
MU students juggle classes, parenting

By Janese Silvey

Thursday, April 26, 2012

It's not as though they expect special treatment — if anything, students who double as parents say they want to be treated equally.

But some University of Missouri student parents say they just need a little more understanding from professors and fellow students as they try to balance college and children.

"Parents talk a lot about this, and they want to be held to the same academic standards," said senior Emilia Mense, mom of a 4-year-old. "They just want understanding of their situation."

Mense yesterday led a panel discussion among four single moms who are also MU students, including two graduate students. The event was part of Student Parent Awareness Week hosted by MizFIT's at Mizzou, a student parent club.

MU in recent years has made efforts to be more family-friendly. Faculty Council formed a committee to study the issue a few years ago, and the Women's Center opened a lactation room. The College of Education also hosts ParentLink, which provides resources such as Cub Hub, a program that provides child care while moms and dads study nearby.

MU doesn't keep statistics on student parents, but nationally, an average of 13.7 percent of students at four-year universities are parents, said Julie Shea, who runs the preschool at the MU Student Parent Center.

It's important to not only make sure parents stay and succeed in college, she said, but also to recruit young parents to ensure they can get better jobs, meaning situational poverty won't become generational.

"There's a lot of research that says getting a college education is, in some instances, a step out of poverty and lets you actually support yourself and your children," Mense said.
One of the more common obstacles parents say they face in college is not being able to attend evening activities — not social events, but rather professional networking and extracurricular experiences students are expected to have. Often, the events aren't child-friendly, and moms agreed that evening child care is too costly.

"If there's an after-hour meet-and-greet with the dean, there's usually alcohol served," said graduate student LaNee' Bridewell, mom of a 3-year-old. "I can't take my son to that adult setting."

And many clubs meet in classrooms that have tables and equipment — not a good environment for an active 4-year-old boy, said mom Maegen Hahn, a senior.

MU also lacks consistent policies regarding attendance when student parents have sick little ones at home. Although professors in smaller classes tend to be understanding, Hahn said, it is tough to convey the problem to instructors who teach large undergraduate courses.

Senior Alana Flowers once attempted to take her 2-year-old daughter to a class while trying to balance a hectic schedule. When the girl proved to be too talkative, Flowers was asked to leave. She also attempted to take a quiz for class in the dean's office with her daughter in tow but was told the office wasn't a baby-sitting service.

Heidi Stallman is seeking her doctorate while raising 3-year-old twin boys. She said she is careful not to seem as though she is making excuses and rarely misses school duties, but sometimes she has family obligations that have to be met.

She said she tried so hard her first two years of the program that she had a breakdown.

That's why Bridewell was disheartened when she was recently accused of not trying hard enough. "There's a lack of understanding of real-life obligations," she said. "I'm doing the best I know how."