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MU Hosts Summit on Diversity

By Janese Silvey

A two-day summit on the University of Missouri campus is emphasizing the need for faculty, staff and students to respect and be civil to one another.

Civility can take different forms. At the 2012 Diversity Summit, workshops hit on varied topics such as keeping online conversations civil and making sure buildings and academic lessons are designed with everyone in mind.

For MU football player Eric Waters, it means getting rid of stereotypes. At one session focused on civility in sports, Waters said Tiger athletes aren't mean or disrespectful — they're "fun-loving" and "gentle giants."

"A lot of people think we abuse and mistreat women, and that is wrong," he said. "We try to stay away from that. It's not about the stereotypes everyone puts on us. We live our lives and do carry ourselves like true gentlemen and avoid things that are harmful to us and our program, coaches included."

The MU athletics office, like campus, is committed to creating a welcoming environment, said Sarah Reesman, executive associate athletic director. There are some challenges in sports — such as how to address athletes who identify as a different gender — but Reesman said the sports community at large is working on those issues to become more inclusive.

Diversity has been a hot topic at MU for years, but efforts were ramped up after cotton balls were left outside the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center during Black History Month in 2010 and a racist slur was painted on university property in February 2011. The latter incident led to the creation of One Mizzou, a student-led initiative designed to promote the idea that all Tigers are part of the same family.

Although the diversity summit is held annually, this year it kicked off a new "Show-Me Respect" campaign to promote civility. The combined efforts have been incredible, said Noor Azizan-Gardner, who yesterday was named chief diversity officer on a permanent basis.

"There's so much to do," she said. "We're just scratching the surface."

Roaming from session to session yesterday, Azizan-Gardner said the summit highlights the energy the university is putting into promoting civility and diversity.

"Everybody is all in this together," she said.

MU Faculty Council also is looking to take another stab at making diversity part of every student's education.

Professors two years ago voted down a proposal that would have added a diversity course to general education requirements. The council is eyeing ways to incorporate diversity at the college or department level, rather than mandating a universitywide requirement, said Clyde Bentley, an associate professor of journalism who chairs the council's diversity committee.

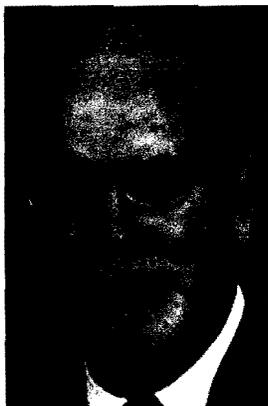
Most incoming student athletes already take a course that tackles issues of diversity. Waters said he took the course and tries to lead by example.

"You have your own ideas and you have your own views, and I'm not going to go against your views," he told the group gathered for the sports-related session. "You're entitled to your opinion. If you establish yourself as a certain sexual orientation, go ahead. I was raised in a Christian household and taught that's morally wrong, but I'm open to anything. I'm not going to defriend anybody over it."

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

Health professions dean to leave post

Richard Oliver will step down as dean of the University of Missouri's School of Health Professions at the end of the school year.



Richard Oliver:
Leaving post at School of Health Professions

Oliver was named the first dean of the school when it separated from the School of Medicine in 2001. Before that, he served as director of the School of Health Related Professions since 1986.

On his watch, enrollment in the health professions program has tripled in the past decade, with nearly 2,500 students now enrolled.

"He has devoted his entire career to making MU a better place for our students, faculty and employees," Provost Brian Foster said in a statement. "His dedication has been crucial as we have educated students who now care for thousands of people across the state and nation in many health fields, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy and speech therapy."

Oliver is a founding member of the Missouri Health Professions Consortium and the Allied Health Research Institute and recently was named president-elect of the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions.

MU will conduct a national search to replace him.

Increased prevention efforts lead to more sexual violence reports at MU

By [Naif Bartlett](#)

October 30, 2012 | 6:28 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – Prevention efforts against sexual violence on MU's campus made victims feel more comfortable to open up and seek help, said Danica Wolf, the coordinator of MU's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center.

Victims have reported more sexual assaults on campus to "non-police" organizations such as the RSVP Center and Residential Life in 2011 than in previous years, according to the annual [Campus Crime and Fire Safety Report](#) released by the MU Police Department.

Of the 11 sexual assaults on campus that were reported in 2011, five were reported to campus police and six to campus organizations – up from just one in 2010 and none in 2009 or 2008.

Wolf says the spike in reports to campus organizations is a good sign.

"Campuses across the nation with really effective prevention programs also see a spike in numbers reported before seeing a decrease," Wolf said. "I tell students and parents that it is not a bad thing to see these numbers go up because then we know people are being taken care of."

Campus police has specific standards for what constitutes a sexual assault – it generally involves touching another person. Other sexual offenses, such as indecent exposure, are not counted as sexual assaults in the [Campus Crime and Fire Safety Report](#).

The student groups from the RSVP Center, [Stronger Together Against Relationship and Sexual Violence \(STARS\)](#), [Greek Advocates](#) and [RSVP Educators](#), have been working to spread awareness about sexual violence and reduce stigma around reporting it. The goal, is to have an impact on victims who are "on the fence" about whether to talk to somebody, Wolf said.

[Green Dot](#), the RSVP Center's primary prevention program, has been instrumental in spreading awareness about campus resources for victims who want to get help. It is a

program based on bystander intervention, relying on onlookers to help prevent a situation that could lead to violence.

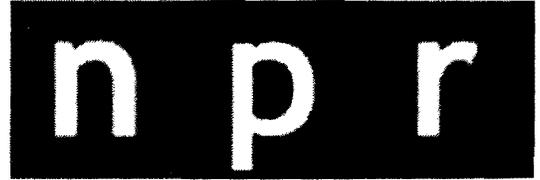
"In just a few short years, most of the undergraduate students at MU know what Green Dot is and that incidents of violence are being prevented every day," Wolf said. "People see Green Dot buttons on bags and other things to remind them to intervene, and it helps to know they have a place to go if something happens."

Another contributing factor to the increase in reports is the new, well-trafficked location of the RSVP Center. It went from a "little corner" in Memorial Union to a bright and centrally-located office in the basement of the MU Student Center, where Wolf says there is not as much stigma about going in to get help.

"When folks feel comfortable to come in and even just be in the space, they're going to be more willing to talk to us about these issues," Wolf said.

Supervising editor is Simina Mistreanu.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH



AP Associated Press

Nature slams campaigns into real world

MU MENTION P. 3

WASHINGTON • Suddenly, after drifting through months of confusing finger-pointing and iffy economic theory, the presidential candidates are getting walloped by an all-too-tangible October surprise. Superstorm Sandy is a real-world, gut-level test.

The force of nature threw cold water on the campaign bickering just as President Barack Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney were charging into a final week of man-made rancor.

"It's sort of like Mother Nature is intervening and calling a timeout," said historian and presidential biographer Douglas Brinkley.

Obama can't afford to be caught taking his eyes off an unfolding crisis. Romney needs to avoid appearing callous about the lives lost and homes flooded; he's decided to go on with campaign events but dial down the politics.

Seven years after Hurricane Katrina, neither candidate wants to talk about the political implications of the storm that lurched up the East Coast and left millions without power.

But their campaigns have to think about it. All presidential teams sweat about the potential for an October surprise — a late-in-the race event or disclosure that can turn the race upside down. And there's never been one quite like this.

While Obama canceled his campaign appearances at least through Tuesday, Romney wavered. First the campaign said Romney would skip a Kettering, Ohio, rally Tuesday out of sympathy for the storm victims. Then he decided to do the event but recast it as a storm-relief effort, shorn of the usual campaign attacks.

The storm's political impact is still unknown. At the very least, the aftermath in New York City and elsewhere will dominate the news and distract a nation of voters during the crucial handful of days that remain before Nov. 6.

More concrete effects on Election Day are yet to be tallied: how many early voting days lost, how many voters who don't make it to the polls because of power outages, damaged homes or cleanup duties, whether any polling places or election equipment are damaged. Four states seen as pivotal to this election were hit — North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio and New Hampshire.

Though rapid-fire campaign ads continue apace, Brinkley, a Rice University professor, predicted that the presidential race's less-strident tone will continue over the next week, even after campaign schedules return to full strength.

"When the nation's largest city and even its capital are endangered, when so many people are in peril and face deprivation," Brinkley said Monday, "it's hard to get back to arguing over taxes."

For Obama, the federal response to the natural disaster could make or break his bid for a second term. Romney risks losing momentum in his push to move ahead in the few tight state races expected to decide the election.

"It stops the campaign more or less dead in its tracks," said Republican pollster and strategist Mike McKenna, who doesn't work for the Romney campaign. "A pause always helps the guys on defense. It helps the Obama guys catch their breath a little bit and think about what to do next."

McKenna says Romney shouldn't take much time off and should instead focus on key states outside the storm zone.

"If I were Romney, I'd be in Colorado and Michigan and Wisconsin," McKenna said. "Start off with a prayer for the people in New York and New Jersey, definitely do that, but don't stop attacking. Try to keep your momentum through this."

For Obama, missing a few days of active campaigning for vital presidential duties may be a good trade, politically speaking.

Lingering anger about the previous president's performance when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans provides a backdrop that will benefit Obama if his administration does a solid job, said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center.

"You gain much more as a president being contrasted with George W. Bush and Hurricane Katrina than you do giving a speech in some battleground state and getting on the evening news as a campaigner," Jamieson said.

She said a natural disaster gives a sitting president "unlimited access to the media to say things the public wants and needs to hear in a fashion that reinforces that he is president."

The 2008 election also was hit by a fall surprise, albeit one of human creation—the plummeting stock market and near collapse of the nation's financial sector that September. Many voters blamed that on the Republicans in power, and it helped Obama capture the presidency.

This time, neither candidate can be accused of failing to prevent the weather. But Obama's reputation will suffer if the federal government's response is feeble or botched.

With Election Day a week away, there may be little time to make such assessments, however, and a risk of appearing to politicize tragedy if Romney speaks up too soon — a complaint that Democrats lodged against him when a U.S. Consulate in Libya was attacked.

"Criticism could boomerang if it appears to be ginned up to win votes in the election as opposed to genuine concern that people were not protected or people were not helped," said Mitchell McKinney, a professor of political communication at the University of Missouri.

For the former Massachusetts governor, with no political office as a platform, finding a strong, positive role in the storm response is difficult. Romney used a campaign event Monday at a high school gym in Avon Lake, Ohio, to make a plea for donations to the Red Cross. His campaign offices in storm-hit areas were collecting emergency supplies.

Even as Obama canceled an appearance in Florida on Monday and rushed back to Washington to oversee the storm response, first lady Michelle Obama and Vice President Joe Biden kept campaigning.

"In times of crisis, we all pull together as one American family," Mrs. Obama told supporters at a campaign event in Iowa City, Iowa, before launching into an upbeat summation of her husband's accomplishments and goals.

The president and Romney also spoke of Americans helping each other.

"President Obama is doing the right thing. Romney, too," said Democratic Party strategist Donna Brazile. "Most Americans know what the closing arguments are by now. Let's focus on taking care of each other."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Bill McKibben to visit MU on behalf of Coal Free Mizzou

By Julie Owens

October 30, 2012 | 6:09 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA— Journalist, educator and **environmentalist Bill McKibben will speak about the global climate change crisis at MU.**

Coal Free Mizzou will host McKibben as a guest speaker 6 p.m. Wednesday in MU's Ellis Auditorium.

Some of McKibben's literary works include: "The End of Nature," "Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future" and "Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet." McKibben also recently published a piece in Rolling Stone magazine called "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math."

McKibben is the founder of 350.org, a global organization that is dedicated to finding solutions to the climate crisis. The organization pushes for policies that will reduce carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere to below 350 parts per million, which is related to controlling climate change.

The 350.org team, along with McKibben, recently launched their national Do the Math tour, which advises the public on the hazards of the fossil fuel industry and the dangers of excessive greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The event is free and open to the public, but people interested in attending are encouraged to RSVP by emailing kaw4vf@mail.missouri.edu.

Supervising editor is Emilie Stigliani.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Letter to the Editor: Smaller tobacco tax increase would work better

Let's consider the size of the proposed tobacco tax increase in Proposition B. It's over five times the current tax. It would go from \$1.70 to \$9 per carton. Missouri does have a low tobacco tax, but a more than five times increase is obviously pure greed.

Everyone would be outraged if the sales tax went up five times, say from 6 percent to 30 percent. And what would you be paying if your property tax was five times higher?

Wouldn't it be fairer to all parties involved if the tax wasn't so high? If the rate was doubled, it would still be a large increase but it would be considerably more tolerable to everyone. Schools would still get a subsidy, jobs would not be lost, tobacco users would not be hit so hard in the pocketbook and Missouri's total revenue would be larger instead of a decrease in revenue that a economics professor has calculated. **Joseph Haslag, a professor from the University of Missouri, has findings that show Missouri would actually lose at least \$34 million a year in tax money if Proposition B would pass.** This revenue would have to be made up somewhere, and all of us would pay.

Let's be reasonable and vote this increase down and let the legislators come up with a more fair compromise.

Vic Colson • Joplin, Mo.