Academic schedule to remain unchanged despite snow, MU Faculty Council says

By Katie Yaeger
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COLUMBIA — Reading Day will remain scheduled for May 10 despite three recent closings following a pair of snowstorms, the MU Faculty Council decided Thursday.

The council decided Feb. 21 will be counted as an academic school day because MU closed after 1 p.m., allowing for many classes to be held. If it had not been counted, this semester would not have met the number of Tuesday-Thursday class days required by the Collected Rules and Regulations, Academic Affairs Committee Chairwoman Nicole Monnier said.

One option was to hold classes on the currently scheduled Reading Day. In spring 2011, after multiple days were canceled because of inclement weather, Reading Day was held the Saturday before exams began.

This decision allows for scheduling flexibility if another cancellation were to occur this semester, Monnier said.

Non-tenure-track voting

The council also decided to postpone voting for non-tenure-track voting rights until the week of March 11.

Stephen Montgomery-Smith, a council member in charge of counting votes, said the person overseeing the voting process could hypothetically change votes with the current system. The council will use the extra week to look at ways to tighten the voting process so the votes cannot be altered and no one can vote twice.

Course evaluations
The MU Assessment Resource Center presented a redesign of course evaluation forms to be implemented for the fall 2013 semester. Course evaluation forms were last revised about 25 years ago, said Jim Spain, MU vice provost for undergraduate studies.

One form would be used for all undergraduate and graduate courses. Questions would be modified to incorporate key constructs identified by the Faculty Council and input from surveys given to faculty, administrators, campus leaders, students and other stakeholders. The new form would include a comments section, and instructors could choose to add a class-specific supplement form.

Answers to five evaluation questions would be available to students to view on myZou. Currently, answers to three questions are available.

The council's academic affairs committee will continue to look at the redesigned form, which needs to be finalized by June, Spain said.
A vote that was originally set to take place on SurveyMonkey would extend campus-wide voting rights to online Non-Tenure Track staff members. Faculty Council met on Feb. 19 to discuss the vote. Maneater File Photo

By Jack Howland

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**The council decided SurveyMonkey software was not secure.**

"We need to keep this as neutral as humanly possible," associate professor of nursing Rebecca Johnson told Faculty Council at Thursday’s meeting.
Johnson was one of many staff members to express concern about plans for the online non-tenure track faculty vote. The vote, which was discussed at a Feb. 19 general faculty forum, would extend campus-wide voting rights to NTT staff members. The vote was originally set to take place on a program called SurveyMonkey.

SurveyMonkey, an online survey service, allows users to create and distribute free questionnaires. It offers surveys "made easy" and access to different templates, the website states.

Johnson pointed out that the proposed program can allow a user to change selections and could be “very bad” for the NTT vote.

“This is a hot issue,” Johnson said. “And people are going to be very, very skeptical.”

Mathematics professor Stephen Montgomery-Smith, who was put in charge of organizing the vote, said that he noticed potential problems with the website when he started exploring it. He said he quickly realized he could change a person’s vote. He also pointed out that it was possible for someone to clear their results and vote again.

The vote could use paper ballots, Montgomery-Smith suggested. He also acknowledged that someone else on the council could watch over the survey or, if possible, they could put off the vote for another week.

“We could look for other software or shop around,” Montgomery-Smith said.

Professor of Biomedical Sciences Cheryl Heesch, a member of the Faculty Affairs Committee, said she thinks the council should consult with an information technology employee first. She emphasized that one of their systems could be more accurate.

“It seems like there would be a possibility that someone in information technology would have a system that they collect votes on,” Heesch said.

The situation ultimately needs to be locked down, Associate Professor of Political Science Cooper Drury said. He said that regardless of whether or not SurveyMonkey will be accurate, or even if someone was there to watch over Montgomery-Smith, it still creates a bad situation.

Douglas Wakefield, director of the Center for Healthcare Quality, mirrored this sentiment. He told Faculty Council it needs to be sure it has the process right.

“This has potential to be nasty,” Wakefield said.

**NTT staff currently make up 36 percent of full-time assistant, associate and full professors on campus, according to MU institutional research. If passed, the vote will change the definition of faculty to include those who identify themselves as NTT. At last week's general faculty forum, staff in attendance almost unanimously supported the vote.**
This vote needs to be handled carefully, Johnson told the council. She said it shouldn’t come from Montgomery-Smith but instead from Faculty Chairman Harry Tyrer. He should be a central source, Johnson said.

Johnson also said that measures need to be taken to ensure people remember to vote.

“Faculty need a reminder about what the vote is giving them,” Johnson said. “What they’re going to get if they vote yes (or) if they vote no.”

Tyrer said that eligible faculty will be sent reminders. The vote was originally scheduled to take place from March 4 to 8 but could be delayed until later. There will be further discussions on voting options in the near future.
MU professor predicts another hot, dry summer for 2013

By Hanna Jacunski

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Can CoMo handle 80 more inches of snow to balance out past summer’s drought?

Despite the snow falling from the rooftops, Columbia is in for another hot, dry summer.

Tony Lupo, a professor of soil, environmental and atmospheric sciences, is predicting Columbia’s 2013 summer will be a little cooler than last year’s heat wave.

“It’ll be above normal but with range of what we would call typical,” Lupo said. “It’ll continue to be dry, but not as dry as last year.”

The long-range forecast was made using data from the El Niño and La Niña weather patterns.

“When we make a long range forecast, we start by looking at El Niño and La Niña,” Lupo said. “That’s the 800-pound gorilla of weather patterns with two seasons.”

According to a MU News Bureau news release, the two different patterns can mean vastly different weather for mid-Missouri. La Niña directs the jet stream from the Pacific Ocean on a northeastern path over Canada. Rain-producing storms follow the jet stream, leaving states in the central and south-central U.S. dry. El Niño, on the other hand, not only brings moisture to the Midwest, but also brings cooler and wetter weather. Lupo’s forecast is also based on patterns of jet streams and computer models of ocean temperature. The computers predict ocean temperatures for the rest of the year, to judge whether El Niño or La Niña is the dominant weather pattern that year.

Statistics of what happened during past El Niño and La Niña years are usually used to make long-term predictions, but Lupo said that this year the pattern is currently neutral, which means the pattern is not clearly El Niño or La Niña. He said the computer patterns predict it will continue to stay neutral all year and continue to stay around average levels temperature and precipitation.

“For me, a neutral pattern means you stay with what you’ve got,” Lupo said, laughing. “And what we’ve got is a little drier than normal.”
Associate professor of soil science Randall J. Miles said he thinks soil moisture, crop and tree production could face problems.

“For the past 12 months, we are about 9 to 10 inches short compared to the 30-year, 12-month average,” Miles said in an email. “The soil profile is dry, below about 18 inches as of right now.”

Dry soil is a problem because soil stores water for plant use, Miles said. Soil normally stores moisture in the during the winter months so plants can use the moisture during the summer.

Miles said the verdict is out as to whether the snowmelt will actually aid in repairing drought damage.

“If most of the snow melts and runs off, it will help the rivers, lakes, and streams much more than the soil and crops,” Miles said. “The major amount of water from the snow must infiltrate into the soil to really start to ease the drought.”

Lupo said the snowstorms have been a big help but not big enough.

“Right now, still behind on moisture,” Lupo said. “We would need another 80 inches to balance out the dryness.”

Dryness that cannot be cured by 20 inches of snow is a result of two very dry summers, Lupo said.

“If we get too far behind in moisture, it'll take a longer period of time to recover,” Lupo said. “It takes as long to get out of something as it does to get in. We’re 18 months into this, so it may take a year to 18 months to get out.”

Lupo said he is hopeful not to have a record-breaking summer again but also said heat and dryness are both inevitable.

“Drought is just part of the natural ebb and flow of things,” Lupo said. “We've seen it before and we'll see it again.”
Mizzou Hunger Dinner simulates food insecurity, supports Tiger Pantry

By Andrew Beasley

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Attendees were randomly separated into "poverty," "unemployed," middle-class" and "upper-class" categories.

Students had the chance to place themselves in the shoes of people living with food insecurity at the Mortar Board's Mizzou Hunger Dinner this Wednesday in Memorial Union.

The event benefited Tiger Pantry, a student-run food pantry serving MU students, faculty and staff. It showed what some students and faculty go through when they have trouble affording basic necessities such as food.

“The goal for this year is really promoting campus-wide education about what we do and kind of eliminating the stigma that comes with asking for food assistance,” Tiger Pantry Director Paul Haluszczac said. “We want to show what food insecurity really is and how real it is on campuses nationwide.”

After purchasing a ticket, guests were invited to take a seat at one of the tables in the room. In front of them was a piece of paper, which they were instructed not to turn over. As the majority of guests reported that they had not attended the inaugural hunger dinner in 2012, most didn’t know what to expect from the night.

“I knew it has something to do with Tiger Pantry but not much besides that,” junior Clint Cannon said. “I knew there was food involved, so I was pretty down to come.”

When the dinner began, the guests turned their papers over. They found that they were separated into four groups: “poverty,” “unemployed,” “middle-class” and “upper-class.” Those in “poverty” were given a plate with a spoon of rice, “unemployed” got rice and beans, salad was added to the rice and beans for the “middle-class” and the “upper-class” received a complete chicken dinner. Looks on the diners’ faces ranged from disappointment to laughter and mocking to envious.

The simulation allowed students to view hunger from perspectives they most likely were not used to, MSA Secretary of Auxiliaries Mahir Khan said.
"You see a lot of diversity in terms of race and ethnicity and religion and sexual orientation, but socioeconomic status isn’t really something you wear,” Khan said. “It isn’t something you portray actively.”

The problem of food insecurity begins very close to home, Haluszczak said.

“Basically (Tiger Pantry’s) goal is to focus on students, faculty and staff that experience food insecurity,” he said. “We like to touch base on graduate students who only typically make about $10,000 a year, which is below the poverty level for one individual, but then if you are trying to support a family it just multiplies. Then there’s staff that make very low salaries and international students who can’t apply to federal programs, they can also get food through us.”

As participants began eating, Haluszczak was invited up to talk about Tiger Pantry and its role on campus. The event, he said, was important to show the need for an organization such as Tiger Pantry.

“You are here because you believe in what we do,” he said to the crowd.

Tiger Pantry, which opened its doors last October, began after MSA President Nick Droege visited Arkansas and saw a similar program they had on their campus, Haluszczak said.

“In the first nine weeks we were open we had 225 clients come in, which was a huge number for us,” he said. “We distributed over 6,000 pounds of food, which once again blew our minds. We’ve exceeded goals that we never even knew we could reach for.”
Food Fight fundraiser erupts between MU, Arkansas

By Thom Carter

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The competition dates line up with men’s basketball game vs. Arkansas

A food fight erupted Wednesday, but this isn’t your typical lunchroom chaos. Sloppy Joes and kickin’ chicken aren’t the ammunition of choice — cans are.

Wednesday marked the beginning of a fundraiser called 2013 Food Fight that pits MU against the University of Arkansas. By donating canned foods and other nonperishable items to Tiger Pantry, students can help earn a victory over the Razorbacks.

Arkansas students will be able to donate to their own food pantry, Full Circle, in order to compete with MU.

Full Circle Food Pantry actually helped establish the foundation for Tiger Pantry when Tiger Pantry Fundraising Coordinator Tim Lewis and founders toured the Arkansas pantry, Lewis said in an email. Full Circle recently celebrated its two-year anniversary.

The brain behind the fundraiser was Lewis, Tiger Pantry Director Paul Haluszczak said in an email. As soon as MU officially announced Arkansas as its Southeastern Conference rival, Lewis came up with the idea of the competition. The fact that he had previously toured Full Circle Food Pantry only added to the excitement, he said.

And it’s no coincidence the Missouri men’s basketball team plays Arkansas on next Tuesday.

“I shot a few emails back and forth with Full Circle Pantry about the idea of hosting this event during the weeks between our men’s basketball games and we were able to settle on this date,” Lewis said.

The fundraiser concludes on the night of the game, March 5.

The point system for the competition also resembles that of basketball. Soup, ramen and instant coffee are worth one point; oatmeal, crackers and soap worth two; and canned meat, cereal and fruit worth three. A comprehensive list can be found at the Tiger Pantry website.
Besides imitating basketball, the point system is based on the needs of the pantries and how scarce some items are, Lewis said.

If students want to get involved, the best thing they can do is donate, Lewis said. According to the Food Fight point system, there are more than 20 types of food and toiletries Tiger Pantry will accept, so there’s no shortage of opportunity.

“Spreading the word is also great to allow more students the opportunity of helping fellow students in need,” Lewis said.

Students have the option to donate at six different locations: the Center for Student Involvement, Memorial Student Union Info Desk, Townsend Hall, MU Women’s Center, Registrar’s Office and Cornell Hall.

Once students donate, Tiger Pantry handles the rest, Lewis said.
The Star is honored by business journalists

February 28

The Kansas City Star’s coverage of SoftBank’s offer to buy a controlling interest in Sprint Nextel has won a 2012 Best in Business award from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers.

The coverage by Mark Davis and Scott Canon was recognized in the breaking news category for papers with daily circulation between 100,000 and 200,000.

The organization said the “comprehensive package,” which ran Oct. 16, “clearly explained SoftBank’s deal and the implications for Sprint and its employees, the Kansas City area and the mobile industry. The elements complemented each other smartly, and the writing was extremely readable and relevant.”

Another article in The Star, by Allison Prang of the University of Missouri, received honorable mention in the student category. Prang, who was on an internship at the paper, wrote about policies governing the privacy of college students’ data. The organization said the Aug. 17 story reflected “a lot of research” and “good use of public records.”