International food panel brings meeting to MU

By Karyn Spory

Saturday, March 16, 2013 at 2:00 am

For the first time in memory, the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development held a public meeting on a university campus. And that campus was the University of Missouri, because the board's chairman is MU Chancellor Brady Deaton.

In April 2011, President Barack Obama appointed Deaton to his post on the seven-member board, which advises the Agency for International Development on strategies to promote food production, nutrition and food security worldwide.

"It was an honor to have everyone here," Deaton said after yesterday's meeting, which was held at the Fred W. Smith Forum in the Reynolds Journalism Institute. Deaton noted that it was a chance for MU's researchers, faculty and students to be noticed and for the world to become familiar with MU — yesterday's meeting was the first to be broadcast online.

Deaton said his role as chairman involves linking the university community with government organizations and the private sector.

The theme of this year's meeting was, "Globalization of agriculture and food research, teaching and engagement at land-grand universities."

During the meeting, a panel of MU faculty discussed agriculture research at U.S. universities and how the research can be done globally. Willi Meyers, director of International Agriculture Programs at MU, highlighted several visiting scholar programs that have helped develop international relationships and projects. Meyers pointed to the Borlaug Fellowship Program, which matches scholars from developing countries with a mentor and allows for scientific training and collaborative research exchanges.

However, one of the most common themes throughout the panel was interdisciplinary work.

Jill Findeis, chairwoman of the MU Division of Applied Social Sciences, said she feels MU's interdisciplinary work is a strong aspect to the university.
"The idea of Mizzou Advantage is to break down the traditional disciplinary silos and work across areas," Findeis said, adding that breaking down disciplinary walls is similar to the work that needs to go into breaking down the walls in international collaboration.

Harold Martin Sr., chancellor of North Carolina A&T State University, asked how the culture of interdisciplinary emerged on the MU campus. "How did you remove the stumbling blocks?"

Marc Linit, associate dean for research in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, said interdisciplinary research and teaching is a part of MU's strategic statement and is a top priority.

Deaton said interdisciplinary work has helped to reshape science, not only at MU but around the world. "The world out there — the business sector and private sector — know problem-solving comes from an interdisciplinary approach," he said.

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Posted in Local on Saturday, March 16, 2013 2:00 am.
At MU meeting, agricultural experts examine global hunger

By GH Lindsey
March 15, 2013 | 9:03 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA—MU Chancellor Brady Deaton noted several takeaways from a meeting Friday on the role of university research in addressing global hunger:

- Information exchange across disciplines would increase research effectiveness.
- Agricultural policy should be better informed by research.
- Women should become more involved in the agricultural process.
- Extension work should be expanded to educate farmers on new advances.

Deaton chaired a meeting of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development at the Reynolds Journalism Institute. The board heard from expert panelists including Saharah Moon Chapotin, division chief for agriculture research at U.S. Agency for International Development, and Purdue University agronomy professor Sylvie Brouder.

The board’s primary purpose is to advise the U.S. Agency for International Development on how to best use its resources to fund agricultural development and research in the hopes of ensuring a stable food supply and ending hunger around the world.

The meeting was livecast online, drawing 95 viewers from around the country.

Sustainability

The most pressing issue at the meeting was how to produce enough food to feed the burgeoning world population, which is expected to top 9 billion by 2050, while using environmentally sustainable farming.

“We need to [increase production] in a way that uses fewer resources, less water, less energy and doesn’t degrade the land,” Chapotin said.
For example, integrated pest management programs use natural methods instead of pesticides to reduce the amount of crops lost to insects.

One such USAID program in Cambodia involves cultivating a naturally-occurring fungus called Trichoderma in order to prevent plant diseases caused by other fungi.

These programs should increase production for the long term, even after the intervention ended, Chapotin said.

**Women and youth in agriculture**

Another major theme of the meeting was the need to involve women in the agricultural process at every step, from planting and harvesting to research and development.

In Africa, the majority of the farmers are women, board member Catherine Bertini said.

“When women have control of the food or income, families are fed more nutritiously and their health improves,” Deaton said. “We’ve had solid research on that for some time.”

The relative lack of women in the sciences also poses a major issue for the agricultural community. In 2011, only 37.7 percent of doctoral degrees in plant sciences were awarded to women, according to a 2012 report from the National Science Foundation.

The board also discussed how to get more young people into the farming and agriculture fields. Low interest among youth could result in not having enough farmers to adequately meet the world’s food needs.

“We have to figure out a way to get more young people to be farmers,” Bertini said.

**Interdisciplinary integration and information sharing**

Another topic of discussion was the need for cooperation between disciplines. Interdisciplinary research allows scholars to combine the perspectives of different fields to build upon one another and come to new conclusions.

The Interdisciplinary Plant Group at MU is one example of such integration. The group is made up of researchers from areas such as plant science, genetics, biochemistry and computer science and is recognized as one of the top plant research programs in the country, according to its website.
Making more information publicly accessible would allow researchers to connect the dots and help avoid publication bias, said Brouder.

**Extension work**

The need to expand education for working farmers around the globe was also discussed at the meeting. Research is usually communicated to farmers through university extensions.

Former board member William Delauder spoke about his experiences among farmers in rural Cambodia. The farmers welcomed the assistance provided by agency researchers, but the country needs an effective agricultural extension system to continue educating the farmers, Delauder said.

In Vietnam, there are 2500 farmers for every one extension worker, said Dale Bottrell, a retired MU professor of entomology.

“‘We need to reach millions of farmers with these ideas,’” Bottrell said.

Integrating university research with end-user expertise is an important step toward sustainable agriculture, said Robert Sharp, a professor of plant sciences and head of the Interdisciplinary Plant Group.

Board members also thought it important that governmental policy support agriculture.
A University of Missouri Faculty Council committee has compiled a report that concluded President Tim Wolfe had the authority to close the UM Press without faculty input.

The committee was asked to determine whether faculty had been sufficiently represented in the planned closure of the press and the subsequent reversal of that decision last year. Committee chairman Art Jago said the UM System made the case that the press is related to but not part of the core mission of the university and is not governed by the collective rules and regulations pertaining to discontinuing programs. This means the president was not required to receive faculty input.

The report noted that the press decisions were financially driven: A closure was expected to save a $400,000 annual subsidy, but legal issues with existing authors could have cost $800,000 annually.

The committee did find a need for a common understanding of the meaning of faculty consultation, Jago said — "meaning consulting representatives of the faculty, not your handpicked members of the faculty, but representatives brought together by some common mechanism." He said although the collective rules and regulations are black and white, the issues facing the university are not and the rules' intent should be recognized in such situations.
Mo. House considers Guard tuition aid proposal

March 16, 2013 11:30 pm • Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY • A plan being considered in the Missouri House aims to use state funds to help members of the Missouri National Guard who would lose their federal tuition assistance as a result of automatic federal spending cuts.

The spending cuts, which total $85 billion, took effect March 1 and have caused the military to cut back on tuition assistance. The Army has announced it would be suspending all new requests for tuition aid, which would affect all students seeking to enroll in the summer semester. That could impact the 905 members of the Missouri Army National Guard who currently receive tuition aid from the federal government.

To help offset those cuts, some Missouri House members have proposed expanding the state budget to include additional state tuition assistance. The proposed emergency fund would use $1.5 million in state tax revenue for tuition aid during the fiscal year that starts July 1. Missouri already uses state resources to fund the tuition of 277 members of the Army National Guard, and the additional funding would allow students currently receiving federal help to join that program.

“We believe that tuition assistance for student soldiers and airman in the Missouri National Guard should have been one of the last budget items cut due to sequestration,” said House Budget Committee Chairman Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, a Navy veteran and former Defense Department employee.

Under the House plan, service members would qualify for tuition assistance if they are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and have been accepted to a Missouri public university. Students would then need to maintain a 2.5 GPA to remain eligible.

Service members are disqualified if they pursue degrees in divinity or theology or if they have already received bachelor’s degrees. Missouri’s aid is based on the cost of credit hours at the University of Missouri system.
One of the lawmakers involved in the House proposal personally knows how it helps. Rep. Jeff Grisamore, R-Lee’s Summit, has two sons currently serving in the Missouri National Guard who used tuition aid and another who is going to be enrolling during the year. Grisamore said he was “hopeful” the federal government would restore the cuts.

In addition to the $1.5 million to help replace lost federal tuition assistance, the House Budget Committee’s plan also includes an additional $1 million to shore up current state tuition aid and funding for veterans burials performed by the National Guard.

The Missouri National Guard performed military honors at more than 9,000 funerals in 2012 and is projected to do the same in 2013.

House members said the state’s emergency funding would help cover some, but not all, of the lost tuition costs from the federal budget cuts. Stream said the funding increase would still fall about $3 million short of current needs.

“This is just to get us through in hopes that the federal government will step up and restore the funds, but this is by no means the full answer. We by no means want to let the federal government off the hook with their obligation to take care of our service men and women,” said Rep. Marsha Haefner, R-St. Louis.

An effort is already under way in Congress to restore the tuition assistance cuts. On Thursday, two U.S. senators announced they intend to amend a federal budget stopgap measure to reinstate tuition aid for the armed services. The Army, Marine Corps and Coast Guard have already suspended their assistance programs because of the automatic budget cuts.

Maj. Tammy Spicer, a spokeswoman for the Missouri National Guard, said that if the budgetary situation improves, the Army has said it will re-examine the tuition aid cuts. The cuts also affect tuition help for active duty and reserve Army members. Spicer said there were other concerns over the cuts including the more than 1,000 Missouri National Guard technicians who may be in jeopardy if a furlough — which she called a “tool of last resort” — were to take place.

Service members will still be able to qualify for education aid under the G.I. Bill, which has been spared from the budget cuts so far.
BOSTON — At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, faculty fret about the future of the school's Plasma Science and Fusion Center.

Thirty miles away, administrators at the state university campus in Lowell worry that research aimed at designing better body armor for soldiers could suffer.

The concerns have emerged because of automatic federal budget cuts that could reduce government funding for research done at educational institutions, spending that totaled about $33.3 billion in 2010, Department of Education statistics show. And the possible cuts add to another anxiety at those schools and others across the country: brain drain.

President Barack Obama and lawmakers failed to agree on a plan to reduce the nation's deficit that would have avoided the automatic spending cuts, which began to roll out this month. Included in the cuts are 5 percent of the money for programs that fund education research, a Department of Education spokesman said Friday. But because negotiations over how to balance the budget are ongoing, the timing and size of many cuts to be made by government agencies remain unclear.

"One of the questions we don't know is if agencies will elect to cut funding by not making new grants or cutting back on old grants," said Terry Hartle, a senior vice president at American Council on Education.

In the meantime, professors are left wondering how many young scientists will become discouraged by domestic funding challenges and either leave for careers abroad or change fields.
At MIT, doctoral candidate Nikolai Begg said he’s lucky the research he’s working on now has corporate sponsorship.

"It’s kind of scary to be hearing that a lot of that support is going away," he said of government cuts. "How do we keep America technologically relevant has been a question on everybody's mind. And the sequester only makes that harder."

The 25-year-old mechanical engineer recently won a $30,000 Lemelson-MIT award for inventions that aim to make surgical procedures less invasive. But Begg is concerned about whether government funding losses could force undergraduates who are contemplating higher degrees to enter the workforce for financial reasons, meaning a loss of American ingenuity in the end.

"I wonder if this whole issue is going to prevent people from going into more advanced research where they can really innovate. ... We don’t really know what it’s going to do yet. There’s not enough information out. You know the storm is coming."

Some university officials say a loss of federal funding from the cuts aggravates a current trend: Scientists already have less time to spend in their labs because they have to spend more time seeking grants.

"What the sequester has done is make more dramatic this trend," said Scott Zeger, Johns Hopkins University’s vice provost for research. "... It means that people aren’t spending quiet time thinking about how nature works."

Breast cancer researcher Debu Tripathy, a professor at Keck School of Medicine of University of Southern California, compared a scientist who doesn’t spend enough time in a lab because of grant writing to a politician who is too busy campaigning for re-election to serve constituents.

He worries the country’s commitment to a war on cancer, going back to the signing of the National Cancer Act in 1971, could falter. Tripathy said a lot of good science isn’t getting funded and bright minds aren’t coming into the field.

"If we don’t engage the brightest minds to continue the trajectory we’re on, then that will affect a whole generation," the doctor said.
At Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, dean Larry Shapiro said the automatic cuts are causing anxiety among young researchers who are wondering what career options they'll have if the current economic climate becomes "the new normal."

"This is all that's being discussed in the hallways and over coffee," he said.

He said two genetics researchers recently decided to leave the university and move their labs to the United Kingdom amid the climate of funding losses.

"Scientists are passionate about their work, and they'll go where they have the best opportunity to accomplish it," Shapiro said.

Washington University School of Medicine could be looking at $30 million to $40 million in budget cuts because of cutbacks at the National Institutes of Health and possibly having to cut 300 scientific personnel jobs, according to Shapiro. The school is part of a consortium working on new therapies for Alzheimer's disease, and he said that work would be slowed considerably because the NIH is a big funding source.

At University of Massachusetts-Amherst, school officials are projecting that they could lose about $8 million in research money, which could affect projects including biofuels research.

But UMass-Amherst chemistry professor Paul Lahti, who is leading research on better ways to harvest solar energy, said it's the job of senior faculty members to keep students encouraged and excited about the future of discovery despite negative economic factors.

"You carry on and do the best work you can," Lahti tells them.

"The science is going to get done," the professor said. "The younger people in the end are the ones that are our most important project."
REDI, RJI partner to foster media startups

Effort emphasizes entrepreneurship.

By Karyn Spory

Saturday, March 16, 2013 at 2:00 am

The University of Missouri's Reynolds Journalism Institute is partnering with Regional Economic Development Inc. on a program to help media-related startups.

The media accelerator is intended to help media or journalism-related startups by reducing the time it takes to go from an idea to a successful launch.

Randy Picht, executive director at RJI, said it is the people with the small ideas who will help sustain and strengthen journalism. "We want to see more of that and take advantage of the resources we have here at the journalism school to help that along," he said.

On Wednesday, the REDI board of directors unanimously approved partnering with RJI on the program.

"First and most importantly, this is part of what we've established as our strategic objective, which is working to create a stronger entrepreneurial community," REDI President Mike Brooks said.

Brooks said part of REDI's mission is to be a catalyst, supporter or collaborator in entrepreneurial opportunities.

"I don't have a crystal ball and know what kind of enterprises might come out of it, but Columbia is a strong journalism-based community," said Vicki Russell, REDI board chairwoman.

Russell, who is publisher of the Tribune, said the newspaper could potentially benefit from the creation of new ways to reach audiences.

At this time REDI is not being asked to be an investor but rather a mentor to the possible startups.

RJI will be responsible for managing the accelerator and promoting the startups, while REDI will take care of mentoring. RJI and investors will help create the necessary investment capital.
Picht said the media accelerator is in an early stage, and RJI is still trying to decide what kind of model to follow and where to house it. "We're looking at whether we do something similar to other accelerator models," Picht said.

Other models have companies come in for three or four months and receive initial funding and mentoring services.

Picht said at the end of the accelerator period, the companies have a demo day where they show what they've done and hopefully find additional investors, so they can keep developing their companies.

Brooks said although there is no guarantee a company that goes through the accelerator would stay in Columbia, the opportunity for REDI is to convince them Columbia is the "place to be."

"I think it's obvious with RJI here and having the premier journalism college in the country it makes sense for all of these things to come together," Russell said.

Russell said journalism students are particularly enterprising and noted they are constantly creating new business concepts. She said the accelerator could help the students turn their concepts into successful enterprises.

"It's good for the university, it's good for Columbia and it's good for journalism," Russell said.

Russell said she hopes once this accelerator is established it can be duplicated and focused on other types of enterprises.

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Posted in Local on Saturday, March 16, 2013 2:00 am.
Symposium considers kinship, culture

By Karyn Spory

Saturday, March 16, 2013 at 2:00 am

Kinship can be characterized differently by academic department, and it also has changed over the course of time. This is why the University of Missouri's ninth annual Life Sciences and Society Symposium — "Claiming Kin" — looks at how the classification of kinship has been defined over discipline, culture and time.

"We're interested in the commonalities that might join human communities to each other in the way they deal with kinship," said Stefani Engelstein, director of the Life Sciences and Society Program at MU.

"I think the Life Sciences and Society programs captures what may be MU's greatest strength — our strong, deep, culture of interdisciplinary research and education," Provost Brian Foster said.

The symposium, which runs throughout the weekend, began last night at Jesse Auditorium as Stephanie Coontz, director of research and public education for the Council on Contemporary Families, discussed the history of kinship, specifically in terms of marriage.

Coontz said the question of marriage was usually answered by a woman needing a man to provide. However, Coontz said, marriage was invented to perpetuate kin lines. "It was to create kin ties and encourage non-related people to cooperate," Coontz said.

Coontz said this was evident in marriages being arranged to procure land, businesses and even nations. However, it was during the late 18th century and the quest of "marrying for love" that Coontz said the definition of kin and gender roles began to change.

"A lot of gender stereotypes, about the differences between males and females, that we think of as traditional, are very recent inventions," Coontz said.

Engelstein said she hopes people understand that we have a limited history from which we pull our "kinship traditions."

"I think it's really nice to be reminded that the ideas we have now are not permanent," said Kat Schultz, 18.
She said that we tend to be rooted in traditions, but it's nice to know that as humans and society evolve so do our traditions.

Engelstein said the talk was "extremely engaging," and she was impressed with the audience interaction. Engelstein added that she is excited to see what the rest of the weekend brings.

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A lost hero of the civil rights era

By Robert Elias, Published: March 15

Robert Elias is a professor of law and politics at the University of San Francisco. He is the author of the forthcoming book "At What Price Equality? The Heroic Court Battle and Mysterious Disappearance of Lloyd Gaines."

Lloyd Gaines had just become a civil rights pioneer. Denied admission to the University of Missouri’s Law School in 1935 because he was African American, Gaines sued, without much hope of winning in Jim Crow America. Yet after the U.S. Supreme Court finally heard his case in 1938, the justices ruled that unless Missouri created a black law school overnight, it would have to admit Gaines to the all-white law school. This was astonishing news for a black boy born dirt-poor in rural Mississippi who had watched racism follow his family’s migration north to St. Louis.

In the spring of 1939 it appeared, remarkably, that Gaines would enter the Missouri Law School later that year as the first African American ever enrolled there. On the cold, rainy evening of March 19, Gaines told a housemate he was going to buy stamps. He went out... and was never seen again.

What happened to Lloyd Gaines? Did he vanish because he and his family were threatened? Was he bribed to abandon his plans? Was he overwhelmed by the pressures of fighting his case? Was he so traumatized that he committed suicide? Was he murdered by racists? Did he leave the country?

There is evidence for all these theories, but the case has never been solved, or even seriously investigated, despite occasional pleas to the FBI by the NAACP and others. Not only did this legal trailblazer vanish, but the extraordinary story of his life and groundbreaking efforts also have been largely overlooked.

During the Great Depression, African Americans were hit particularly hard. The United States was gripped by economic destitution and Jim Crow policies that reflected the nation’s apartheid system. Sanctioned by the Supreme Court’s 1896 decision in Plessy v. Ferguson, blacks endured a renewed servitude where separate facilities rarely existed and certainly were not equal. Seeking relief, many African Americans in the South joined the Great Migration north. Many held out great hopes but also suffered great disappointments.

Plessy’s official segregation was eventually overruled by the 1954 decision in Brown v. Board of Education. But that dramatic reversal was not imposed overnight. Rather, it was the result of a long-term legal strategy launched in the 1930s by the brilliant NAACP attorney Charles Houston.
and the attorney (and future Supreme Court justice) Thurgood Marshall. They sought to wear down segregation by making it too expensive to provide even the semblance of real equality. An initial step in that strategy, and the first crack in the "separate but equal" doctrine, was made possible by Gaines, an honors graduate of Lincoln University, in Jefferson City, Mo., who hoped to become a lawyer.

After barring Gaines from the whites-only University of Missouri Law School, the state offered to help cover Gaines's cost of attending law school in another state. Gaines refused. His family hadn't moved north and paid taxes that funded state institutions so he could be forced to study elsewhere, he reasoned. The NAACP argued that paying a black student to leave the state didn't satisfy the "equal" in "separate but equal." Surprisingly, a majority of the high court agreed and ordered Gaines admitted.

The story of Brown is well known. But it has overshadowed the pioneering cases and actors that were its indispensable precursors. Lloyd Gaines was essential to the legal strategy launched nearly two decades earlier that targeted higher education overall and legal education in particular.

And what about Gaines himself — his life, aspirations, courage and even doubts? The 2007 Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act asked the FBI to investigate unsolved civil rights era crimes and held out hopes of justice for past victims of racial violence. Gaines's historic role in defeating segregation has been largely ignored outside of legal and other specific circles. Is his fate also being overlooked? Or will authorities finally launch a serious investigation?

Gaines was one of many African Americans who took enormous risks with little or no recognition. His story illustrates the psychology and rewards but also the costs — in inciting hatred and violence — of fighting racism. The battle against Jim Crow has still not been won, which makes it critical that the full history of segregation and the Great Migration be told. Those stories are crucial for moving toward a more racially just America.

In pursuing his lonely court battle, Gaines courageously stepped forward, not only for himself but also for countless others to follow. Yet his life ended in obscurity when he vanished into the night. Next week, 74 years will have passed since Gaines disappeared. What happened to Lloyd Gaines is a mystery worth resolving. And in the meantime, his memory should be revived.
Students describe struggle with hunger

By Karyn Spory

Friday, March 15, 2013 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri's dining halls might be filled with a plethora of food, but for some MU students, food security is a real problem.

Last night, students gathered at the campus Women's Center to discuss hidden hunger and food insecurity on the MU campus.

Ashley Vancil, a doctoral student at MU who has been studying hunger and food insecurity for seven years, described food insecurity as "not knowing where your next meal is coming from or having access to nutritionally sound food."

Curtis Pepper, a junior majoring in sustainable agriculture, said as a veteran and a felon, he has had to deal with food insecurity. Pepper said he uses the Tiger Pantry — a food pantry that opened last year on Rock Quarry Road to serve MU students and employees — and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, Missouri food stamp program.

"I've been unemployed for over a year. You check off that little box that says you're a felon, and a door is shut on you," Pepper said. He said he gets about $70 a month in food stamps, but that doesn't go far.

"If it wasn't for Tiger Pantry and the food bank, I probably wouldn't know where I'd get my food from," Pepper said.

Pepper said at food pantries, it's easy to get calorie-rich meals, but it can be difficult to get more nutritional items.

Carly Love, a graduate student and co-fundraising coordinator at Tiger Pantry, said that because she is on her own financially, she uses SNAP.

"As someone who's working and trying to make ends meet, I use it as a resource — not for the rest of my life, but this chapter of life, where it's harder to meet ends financially," Love said.
Ben Datema, an environmental leadership adviser for the department of student life, said he thinks the topic is very relevant to campus — yesterday's gathering was titled "Hidden Hunger" for a reason, he said.

"These issues exist all over, but there are very few visible signs of it," Datema said.

He said he hoped that open discussion about food insecurity could lessen some of the social stigma attached to using food pantries and SNAP.

During the discussion, several panel members said they don't actively discuss their hunger issues with others.

Love said she doesn't disclose that she is on the food-stamp program, but when talking about food insecurity, she becomes an advocate for Tiger Pantry.

Event organizer Kat Seal said she saw yesterday's talk as a success.

"I have been wanting to host this specific event for almost a year," she said, and she hopes it will foster more discussion on campus about food insecurity.

"This is about choices, and people should not have to compromise food for medicine or your bills for food," she said.
MU students spending their spring break in service

By Lauren Hill
March 17, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Michelle Fiesta spent her 2011 spring break in Detroit. She was not there to go sightseeing or visit family. Fiesta was there to serve.

Her MU Alternative Spring Break group stayed in an old rectory of a church. The group volunteered at food banks and tried its hand at urban gardening, planting vegetables later intended for sale.

Arriving in Detroit, Fiesta and her group were aware that it was suffering from economic decline, Fiesta said. They expected to see a crime-ridden city with little to no hope for rebirth. But they found community members ready to save their hometown.

"The trip really busted all the stereotypes," said Fiesta, now a senior in psychology and anthropology from St. Louis.

With MU’s spring break coming up in the last week of March, students are getting ready to serve in a variety of ways, through growing programs such as Alternative Spring Break and, new to spring-break service this year, Engineers Without Borders.

MU program third-largest

When it was created in 1991, MU’s Alternative Spring Break program sent out seven groups of students. This year, 39 groups are going — up from 25 last year and its largest number ever. Thirty-six groups will go this month; two went during the winter break this year; and one went to the Dominican Republic in late January. Caleb Phillips, president of MU’s Alternative Spring Break program, said the number of students participating throughout the year is 478, up from 300 last year. More than 1,050 students applied, up from 525 last year.

This makes it the third-largest college program in the country, said Fiesta, logistics chairwoman for Alternative Spring Break at MU.
The rating is based on the number of students who go on these trips throughout the year and comes from the Break Away program: the national alternative spring breaks organization includes more than 100 chapter schools, more than 400 nonprofit partners and hundreds of individual members worldwide. Phillips, a senior in journalism from Savannah, Mo., said that next year, they hope for 53 or more trips, with the goal to become the largest alternative break program in the country.

The organization is completely student-led. Students find the locations, the housing and the organizations they want to help. Groups are going to locations including Tampa, Fla., Denver, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Chicago. The types of service the students do is up to them. A group going to Columbia, S.C., will work with a growing Hispanic population in the area. The students plan to teach English to Spanish-speaking adults, work with children and lead healthy-living workshops.

A group going to Clarksville, Tenn., plans to visit a military base on the Tennessee-Kentucky border to work with children whose parents have been deployed.

"It opens your eyes to the world," said Phillips, who has gone on trips to Kissimmee, Fla., in 2012, Charleston, S.C., in 2011, and the Dominican Republic this year. "It's a life-changing experience."

Engineers Without Borders

New to spring break service this year is MU's Engineers Without Borders, a student chapter of a national organization that provides consulting and design services of sustainable engineering projects to developing communities. Group members go to one location several times on what they call assessment trips, to make contact with the community they are helping and collect data. The information is used to create a design that will help solve a problem there.

Next, the group brings the design to the community laborers. During the building, members from MU's organization are around to supervise and make sure the design is correct and the problem is solved. The group started in 2007, but implementing a design was blocked due to problems with communication and leadership transitions in the Brazilian community with which they were working, group president Daniel Nabelek said.

This time it will be different. Six students and two professional mentors will travel to Ciudad España, Honduras, to implement their designs to rehabilitate an existing waste water treatment plant.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Ellis Fischel Cancer Center to host open house Tuesday

By Claire Cole
March 18, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Ellison Fischel Cancer Center will host an open house Tuesday to allow the public to tour its new home at University Hospital’s newly built tower.

Attendees will be able to tour the tower from 4 to 6 p.m. at 1 Hospital Drive.

Ellis Fischel, which was previously located at 115 Business Loop 70 W., will occupy the first two floors of the tower. The 100,000-square-foot space will include 50 clinic rooms, a rehabilitation gym and an outdoor patio and garden.

The new center will be equipped to perform 3-D mammography and better breast MRI imaging.

The official grand opening is scheduled for March 25, when the hospital will start seeing patients.

Supervising editor is Simina Mistreanu.
The designs will affect not only Ciudad España, which has about 10,000 residents, but also two or three towns the same size downstream.

Justin Distler, an executive member of the group and a freshman in mechanical engineering from Jefferson City, gave some insight into what the group does — what he calls the teach-to-fish mentality.

"We don't just build houses and leave," Distler said. "Our services are requested by the community and our work is done one on one with the people." Nabelek said doing projects like this puts the world in a new perspective.

"It's not like looking at it on TV," said Nabelek, a graduate student in electrical engineering from Columbia. "You actually see the slums and the supermarkets that have people with guns as you drive by."

Service keeps on giving

Fiesta sees her generation as constantly connected to the wider world through television and the Internet — they cannot escape the news, she said. She thinks that makes her generation more aware of how interconnected the world is.

"We grew up in a global community," Fiesta said. "We know what is going on in the world." For many of these students, then, the giving doesn't end once they return from spring break.

Phillips and his 2011 Alternative Spring Break group started Mizzou Unity Coalition because of their experience with children with disabilities in Charleston, S.C. Mizzou Unity Coalition brings MU students together with people with disabilities in the Columbia area.

In another example of carry-over, that group that went to the Dominican Republic this year has since raised money for four children there to go to school. They were able to raise enough money to allow the children to keep attending school through the summer, Phillips said.

"The coolest part is the passion the students bring," Phillips said. "They continue serving beyond their trips. It is the students that makes this program so great."

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
American Indian group revived at MU

By Karyn Spory

Sunday, March 17, 2013 at 2:00 am

When Anastacia Schulhoff arrived on the University of Missouri campus in 2011, she noticed there were few American Indian students and no organization to represent them. So, she joined with fellow doctoral student Pattie Manning to revive a cultural club for American Indians that had been inactive since 2002.

"I came from a school that had a strong American Indian "presence, but that presence wasn't here," Manning said. "We pushed to get this group reinstated and back to active status."

Four Directions: Indigenous People & Allies, which started in the mid-1990s, is officially back on campus.

Pablo Mendoza, director of the multicultural center at MU, became involved with the original Four Directions in 1998 as an adviser. Mendoza said Four Directions was started as a support group for students with different native backgrounds by Minnie Two Shoes and Kent Blansett. He said the group established a scholarship and even held a powwow on campus before fading out in 2002 after the last club member graduated.

Manning said Schulhoff took care of the paperwork while she looked for members. Schulhoff said there are about 50 people on the service list for the club, but only about eight members are very active.

In October, the club held a "Culture, not Costume" event to let students know how offensive it is to dress as an American Indian for Halloween. In November, the group held a documentary series for Native American History month. Schulhoff said she is working with Clarence Lo, director of Peace Studies, to create a minor in the study of indigenous people.

"We want to let more native students know that" we are here," and there are people here who will support your intellectual and social interest," Schulhoff said.

Schulhoff, the current president of Four Directions, said if the group could do half of what the original group did, it would be able to make a huge impact on the university.

Four Directions isn't the only cultural group that has reorganized this year. MU Voz Latina was created under the name Hispanic Latin American Faculty & Staff Association in 1999, but after
several years of being stagnate, the board decided it was time for a change. Miguel Ayllon, president of Voz Latina, said the revitalization plan included a change in name, logo and an updated mission to empower the community at MU as well as Columbia.

"For the next people that come here, we want to have this already established," Ayllon said.

Ayllon said one of the challenges of being at MU is that because the university is so big, sometimes it's hard to know how or where to find an ally.

"When we are a minority population, it is always exciting to see somebody that speaks your language and understands your culture and heritage," Ayllon said.

The group plans to have a monthly mesa de dialogo — or dialogue table — to allow community members to come and share a research project or professional development project related to Latin America or Latinos in the United States.

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