House oversight panel pushes higher education officials to defend spending

By Zachary Matson
September 25, 2013 | 7:37 p.m. CDT

JEFFERSON CITY — University of Missouri System and Missouri Department of Higher Education officials addressed questions from a House oversight committee Wednesday, defending internal accountability of spending and explaining a new policy aimed at reducing remediation rates.

The Interim Committee on Improving Government Responsiveness and Efficiency heard testimony from David Russell, commissioner of higher education, and Thomas Richards, UM System interim vice president of finance, and pushed them to explain how state dollars are being used at publicly funded schools.

Russell said all funding requests above the current baseline for fiscal year 2014 are based on outcomes of specific objectives set forth by the different schools. But legislators said they wanted to see more specific performance measures of core spending before they would be willing to approve additional money for colleges and universities across the state.

"It’s important that we know how the money that has already been appropriated is being used," said Rep. Kathie Conway, R-St. Charles.

Conway and Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, asked Russell for a detailed compendium of line-by-line budget information from each of the more than 200 universities and colleges that receive state funding, information they said is not easily available.

“To get that, I will have to go to the universities and colleges individually,” Conway said.

Flanigan said he wants to see a report that “delineates all the way down to the number of janitors” at each institution.
Rep. Marsha Haefner, R-St. Louis, requested information comparing colleges and universities within the state about what schools are “doing better with less.”

Rather than continuing to allocate money based on current proportions, Richards said the UM System was beginning to shift toward funding based on a competitive process among the four campuses. The process would be directly connected to meeting specific strategic goals set forth by each school.

Over the past decade, class sizes have increased and services have decreased at UM campuses. Richards said the university has had to defer a significant amount of maintenance and repair of facilities in order to balance the budget, creating a backlog of buildings and equipment in desperate need of repairs or replacement.

“One example might be a brand-new, expensive, high-tech piece of lab equipment where I’ve seen a plastic tarp hanging over the top, so water when it rains won’t leak and damage the equipment,” Richards said. “That’s just something we have to deal with. Those are risks given the limitations we have.”

Haefner also raised concerns about the nuclear research reactor at MU and the measures taken to make sure it is adequately protected, citing a recent study that connected the university’s reactor to the greater vulnerability of the state compared to others.

“(The reactor) does contain bomb-grade material that a terrorist could possibly use,” she said.

Russell said the nuclear reactor is a crucial asset in fulfilling MU’s mission as a major research university.

“Its utility is not only as great as it ever was, but potential research applications are just limitless. ... We need to keep it,” Russell said. “(MU) is extremely well-prepared for any event that might occur.”

**State paying $90 million to prepare students for college**

Making sure students are prepared for college courses, or remediation, costs the state about $90 million per year in direct expenses and deferred costs that could be used for other purposes, Rep. John Mayfield, D-Independence, said.

Mayfield said the amount of money being spent on remediation constitutes a “crisis” that needs to be addressed.
“Ninety million is a lot of money,” Mayfield said. “And you know we are siphoning money off of kids that really need it to train; kids that are for one reason or another behind.”

Rusty Monhollon, assistant commissioner for academic affairs, said the state had developed a task force of officials from the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and local districts to compile best practices and strategies for reducing remediation costs.

He cited a better alignment of college and K-12 curriculums and coordination in order to identify students and intervene with them before high school graduation. But he said the cost of doing nothing and letting students fall behind was greater than any budget line. The group also recommended adding an additional year of math to the high school curriculum.

Monhollon said 52 percent of students at two-year college and 14 percent of students at four-year schools had to enroll in remedial courses before starting work toward a degree.

“It is our responsibility because these are our children, these are our students in the state of Missouri,” Monhollon said.

Some legislators suggested shifting the burden of remediation costs back to the high schools and identifying the districts having the most difficulty preparing students for college courses.

“It appears to me that higher ed is assuming responsibility that should belong to high schools,” said Rep. Anne Zerr, R-St. Charles.

“It seems like we're going down a slippery slope because this cancer of poor education, poor learning is sifting through the system, through grade school, through high school and now it's creeping into college. ... So we need to throw it back on who is responsible,” Zerr said.

_Supervising editor is Gary Castor._
MU is adding two new tools to disseminate emergency alerts

Beacons going in busy areas.

By Karyn Spory

Wednesday, September 25, 2013 at 2:00 pm

After switching to a new alert notification system this fall, the University of Missouri is adding some new features to help notify people on campus in case of an emergency.

This fall, the university will be employing a beacon alert system to help relay messages to people across campus as well as software that will allow the university to override computer screens to project an alert. Both systems are provided by Alertus Technologies and send messages created through the university's mass alert provider, BlackBoard Connect.

The University of Missouri System switched to Blackboard Connect this summer, said Terry Robb, director of information technology at MU.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university will be adding approximately 225 beacons to campus. The beacons resemble digital thermostats and are equipped with strobes and sounds to gain attention of people in the area. They have a small screen to display the alert messages. The beacons will be placed inside buildings in heavy foot-traffic areas, Basi said.

Basi said the university is in the process of wiring the buildings and getting everything set so the beacons can be installed. Basi said the project cost will be around $436,750. Basi said the 225 beacons cost about $750 each, which totals $168,750. The remaining $268,000 would cover installation, including new wiring, labor and cleanup costs.

Robb said the university also has been working to set up and deploy Alertus Desktop, a program that gives administrators the ability to take over computer screens to display alert messages.

"We will use our Blackboard mass notification system to write the message that goes to phones, and we have a special channel that we're going to configure that will force the message we write in Blackboard to be posted to Alertus notification," Robb said.
Robb said the message can be sent to computers owned by the university — typically those used by faculty and staff. However, Robb said his department is working on configuring software that students can download, free of charge, if they want to take advantage of the service.

Robb said there are five people who can send out the alert that will override campus computer screens. Robb said besides himself and a colleague from the information technology department, the MU chief of police, the head of Environmental Health and Safety, and the head of Campus Facilities all have the power to override campus computers to display an alert. Robb added that it is those three individuals who determine when the computers should be overridden.

Robb said the university should be employing both new alert systems within the next month. Robb added the university also is working on overriding the cable system so televisions around campus can display messages as well.

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Posted in Education on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 2:00 pm.
Tastes Like Chicken

MU Mention Page 5

How one company created a plausible substitute for meat that has the texture of real flesh.

by Alton Brown
Chef, best-selling author, and host on the Food Network

The production floor at Beyond Meat’s Columbia, Missouri, factory runs some major industrial equipment. Here, large-format mixers the size of Subarus fold together a blend of soy and pea protein isolates, fiber, and a few other ingredients—including a little titanium dioxide to lighten the gray of the soy into something more like pale saffron.

The mixers empty the resulting concoction into equally large cooker-extruders, the workhorses of commercial food processing, which simultaneously heat the stuff and force it through specially made dies, like massive Play-Doh Fun Factories. Around the world, machines like these squirt out everything from pasta to cheese, from breakfast cereals to hot dogs. No big deal. Except what the extruders at Beyond Meat are pumping out could be a big deal indeed.

I should add at this point that I’m snapping pictures of everything and anything, not so much because I want the pictures, but because I want to see if there’s anything my hosts don’t want me to take pictures of. I’m with a Beyond Meat publicist—sharp clothes, perfect smile—and the operations guy, Bob Prusha, wearing metal-rim glasses (engineers love those) and a blue dress shirt. And in the lead, the idea guy, Ethan Brown. (No relation. He’s the company’s CEO.) Brown is wearing expensive and immaculate running shoes and warm-up pants, hinting that he spends a lot of time on commercial aircraft. And that he lives in California. When we put on hairnets in the office, Brown put a baseball cap on over his. Another way you know he’s the boss: No one calls him out on protocol faux pas. And then, of course, there’s me, the food show host who’s pretty sure he’s seen it all.

Recipe by Alton Brown: Greek Chicken-Free Salad. | Prop styling by Angharad Bailey; food styling by Victoria Granof for Stockland Martel | Marcus Nilsson

So far they’ve all been happy to let me take pictures of whatever I want. But then they lead me around the end of one of the gleaming extruders, where I expect to see 3- by ½-inch gray-brown strips of very convincing faux chicken emerge, because that’s what Beyond Meat specializes in. Except … whoa.
At the end of the machine, where the newly birthed protein bits are breaching, something is odd. There should be a die, a plate with specially shaped holes punched through it. (Again, think back to the business end of your Fun Factory.) But instead I see a long block of metal with a row of small rectangular openings at the end. Hoses plugged into the block hiss and gurgle. I’ve never seen anything like it. I raise my camera.

“I’d prefer you not take pictures of that,” Prusha says.

I turn to Brown, and he grins a grin that makes him look a little bit like Willy Wonka and a little bit like Victor Frankenstein. All he says is “Cool, huh?”

The extruder with the weird rectangular box, they’ll allow, uses steam, pressure, and cold water to knead and knit the proteins and plant fibers in the Beyond Meat mixture into a specific physical arrangement. I push for more details; Brown won’t share. This is the innovation that he thinks will make Beyond Meat different from everyone else who has tried to satisfy the world’s unending appetite for protein without killing animals. This is what separates Beyond Meat’s chicken analog from Tofurky.

Fresh out of the extruder, a strip of Beyond Meat not-chicken is warm but not hot, striated like meat, and to the touch feels animal in origin. My mind races to place the musculature … to identify the anatomical source. The closest thing I can come up with is cooked chicken breast, which I suppose is the whole point. I tear it and watch the break, the way the material separates. It’s more like meat than anything I’ve ever seen that wasn’t meat. Looking closely I can see a repeating pattern, like a subtle honeycomb, that reminds me a bit of tripe. I close my eyes and smell, but since the strip hasn’t received any flavoring at this point, I detect only subtle hints of soy.

I take a bite. While the unflavored product tastes distinctly vegetal and still has a bit of what I’d call tofu-bounce, a hint of the spongy, the tear is … meaty.

As I chew, I recall something Twitter cofounder, confirmed vegan, and Beyond Meat investor Biz Stone told me about his first taste of Brown’s Chicken-Free Strips: “When I ate Beyond Meat, my first thought was ‘If I were served this in a restaurant, I’d tell them they’d made a mistake and given me real chicken.’”

Human beings eat 183 billion pounds of chicken every year, and just about nobody thinks that the way we grow and process these living creatures is sustainable. But replacing a significant portion of that protein with ingredients from lower on the food chain, like plants—while much better for the environment—has never really been an option. It was too expensive, or the meat substitutes fell far short of feeling meatlike. Or both. Now, Biz Stone hasn’t eaten meat in 13 years and may have forgotten a thing or two about chicken, but the more I chew—the more I actually feel the product breaking down meatily in my mouth—the more I think these guys may be onto something. I open my eyes and look back at Prusha and Brown. They’re both smiling a smile that says they’ve seen the look on my face before and never get tired of it. I say nothing. Brown just says, “Right?”

As I feel it breaking down meatily in my mouth, I think: These guys may be onto something.

**Meat is largely water.** But when we taste it, we’re mostly sensing fat and protein. Proteins are simply long chains of amino acids. Plants build aminos as well, but carnivores love meat so much because its
proteins—unlike plants—are relatively easy to access and digest (once you catch the animal). What’s more, meat gives us all the “essential” amino acids our bodies can’t produce, a trick that almost no plant can pull off, which is why vegetarians must carefully combine foods—like nuts and grains—to stay well nourished.

Replicating the flavor of animal flesh is just a matter of gathering certain amino acids, especially the yummiest acid of all, glutamic acid, the key component of monosodium glutamate, or MSG. (In the brain and nervous system, glutamate is a critical neurotransmitter; its taste, umami, is one of only five we know of that the tongue can perceive.) Any decent flavorist can whip you up a brew that tastes like roasted chicken with little more than hydrolyzed vegetable proteins and yeast extracts, using equipment from a high school chem lab. In fact, Beyond Meat does a pretty good job by marinating its product in stainless steel vats with just such ingredients and some simple flavorants after extrusion.

Texture, though, is another matter. That’s because meat is actually skeletal muscle, and muscles are mechanical systems. Every move they make require a sliding interaction of microscopic filaments set into motion by electrical stimuli. These bundles of fibers are what lend different forms of meat their unique textures, and for humans, texture is a very big deal. We like meaty textures because they’ve been hardwired into us through hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. Our teeth are built to tear those fibers apart and grind them into digestible bits. Our mouths can perceive the fine-grain differences between fibrous skirt steak and unctuous duck liver. Flavor tofu however you want—barbecue beef, roast turkey, nacho cheese—but it will always feel like tofu. This is why the meat industry has never much worried about an “analog” meat product. No one has ever been able to synthesize authentic meat texture from extruded vegetable proteins. They just can’t get the structure right. And you might rightly ask, why bother?

After all, we have “real” meat, and one expression of it—chicken—has been practically perfected from a production standpoint. In fact, industrialized chicken is in many respects hard to beat. Chicken flesh is healthier for humans than beef, and it lends itself to a wide array of culinary applications. It takes only about 2 pounds of feed to generate a pound of meat—this is what’s known as its feed conversion ratio—compared with the 6 pounds of feed required for a single pound of beef. What’s more, unlike pigs and cows, chickens don’t produce significant amounts of methane. Handle chickens right and you can repurpose their waste in a bunch of creative ways, including feeding it to cows and sheep. Sounds good, right?

The problem is, Americans eat 96 pounds of chicken per person per year. At that scale, it’s hard to be environmentally responsible. Chicken requires more water and power to process than any other meat (about 4,000 gallons per ton), and once that water is used it turns into toxic sludge. Also, in the middle of that lovely ball of meat is a set of internal organs full of pathogenic bacteria.

Then there’s man’s inhumanity to poultry. Factory chickens are raised under conditions that make the box Alec Guinness enjoyed in The Bridge on the River Kwai look like a suite at the Ritz. Their beaks sometimes have to be trimmed so they don’t peck each other to death in the cramped quarters, and they’re on a constant feed of antibiotics to try to stay ahead of the diseases that spread so quickly in hot, badly ventilated chicken houses. The best news for a feed chicken is that it’s probably not going to live more than 13 weeks.

If you’re still not convinced that we should be looking for a poultry proxy, let me go at this problem from the other direction: You. Or rather, 7 billion of you, all clamoring for higher and higher protein
diets. In 1997, humanity consumed 235 million tons of meat, and we’re on track for 400 million tons in 2030. And human beings don’t want just any old protein. Earth has enough bugs and krill to keep us all in amino acids. But people won’t eat roast cicada or beetle pulp. A big chunk of Earth’s population thinks cows are too sacred to eat; another big chunk thinks pigs are too profane.

But almost everybody eats chicken.

So if you could consume a product that tasted and chewed like chicken in, say, half of your at-home or restaurant meals, would you? And what if that product delivered healthy protein with no antibiotics, cholesterol, trans fats, or saturated fat, yet required only a fraction of the resources to produce while creating little waste or environmental risks? Why wouldn’t you? Ethan Brown thinks you would, even if the price is a bit higher than skinless, boneless chicken breast.

Later, Brown, 42, insists that he isn’t really trying anything new. “You know, the harnessing of steam and then the development of the diesel engine removed the horse from the transportation equation while ultimately providing a better product for consumers,” he says. By the same token, eating animals may someday seem like a quaint relic of a bygone era. I ask him if he’s really that close to a product that would make carnivores forget the succulence of critters. “We are obsessed with perfectly replacing the sensory experience of animal protein,” Brown says. “We’re not 100 percent there yet. But we’re close.”

On his dad’s dairy farm in western Maryland, along the Savage River, young Ethan developed a strong connection to animals. “I loved James Herriot and all those books and Charlotte’s Web,” Brown says. “I really wanted to be a vet.” Instead of catching mice in traditional (and decidedly lethal) traps, Brown caught them humanely and moved them into a cage he built with his dad. “I tried to create different levels for them,” he says. “Looking back I probably wasn’t doing them a favor, but it helped me to understand animals.” Brown had already become a vegan when he encountered Albert Schweitzer’s concept of “reverence for life” in a book that belonged to Brown’s grandfather. The conversion was complete.

When it came time to choose a career, he decided he wanted to tackle climate change. He became a director of business development at fuel-cell maker Ballard Power Systems. But ultimately he wasn’t satisfied—he wanted to do something for animal welfare. He came across an article in World Watch called “Livestock and Climate Change,” by environmental advisers Robert Goodland and Jeff Anhang; he’d found his angle at last. The paper argued that livestock accounts for 51 percent of the planet’s greenhouse gas emissions. If Brown could get folks to eat less meat, he could help the climate and animals.

Problem was, Brown didn’t know how. So he started looking for partners and reading academic papers on meat analogs. That’s how he found food scientists Fu-hung Hsieh and Harold Huff, both at the University of Missouri. They were tackling the texture problem and had made considerable progress toward developing an extrusion process that could actually mimic meat fibers. Brown paid Missouri a visit, and after some back and forth he formed Beyond Meat in 2009. Brown was CEO, Hsieh and Huff were scientific consultants, and the university was a partner.
Today Beyond Meat ships Chicken-Free Strips to 39 states, the District of Columbia, and Vancouver, Canada. The product was first used by retail prepared-foods departments. But in April, Whole Foods started selling Beyond Meat products directly to consumers.

That’s just a start. You see, Brown isn’t interested in selling just another meat analog, fighting it out with the likes of Tofurky. He wants to be in the meat business, with all the mass-market scale that implies. That’s what hooked Biz Stone and his investment partners at Obvious. “My expectation was that this would be another boutique meat analog product for well-heeled vegetarians,” Stone says. Plenty of labs are chasing that market, some further along than others. Scientists at Maastricht University in the Netherlands have grown meat from stem cells and, with a reported $330,000 from Google founder Sergey Brin, cooked it into a burger. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN recently published a paper marshaling evidence that insect protein can be used to make things like sausage. And let’s not forget, NASA is funding a food “printer” that we can only assume will be able and willing to fab a faux T-bone at the push of a button. None of that seems likely to come to fruition anytime soon—and even if it did, who besides vegans would eat it? “When I learned that Beyond Meat intended to compete in the meat industry itself and tackle problems like global resource scarcity and environmental impact,” Stone says, “I was sold.”

Brown’s target is not only vegetarians, who tend to deeply distrust processed foods, a category to which Beyond Meat undeniably belongs. He wants to convert people like, well, me. I’m cutting back on meat but have no intention of quitting it completely. I care about my health and the health of my family, and I wouldn’t mind eating in a way that minimizes any negative impact on the environment. And I like animals. You might say I’m “analog curious.” Problem is, just as vegetarians can be suspicious of processed foods, omnivores and carnivores tend to be irked by foods pretending to be other foods. Brown knows the trick is just to get it onto their plates. Once there, the proof is in the extruded slurry.

A few days after my Missouri visit, a large insulated box arrives at my test kitchen in Atlanta. Inside are three versions of Beyond Meat’s Chicken-Free Strips: Grilled, Southwest Style, and Lightly Seasoned. It’s time to play.

My team of cooks begins by tasting all three flavors cold, then heated. We agree that it tastes chicken-y, but we want to figure out if we can make it actually taste just like chicken. The challenge is it’s already cooked; cooking it more won’t really heighten the product’s meaty characteristics. Most cooking, like stewing, eventually breaks chicken into loose fibers—think about the texture of chicken and dumplings. But the Chicken-Free Strips don’t loosen like that.

Simple stuff first: We grill it and we broil it, and both methods work OK. We can even generate some browning, but it’s still not any more chicken-y. Finally we soak the product in various marinades for anywhere from 30 to 120 minutes to see if flavors can permeate. But Beyond Meat gets marinated at the factory. Our sample supply didn’t want to soak up anything else, and unlike tofu, pressing it doesn’t make it more absorbent. The flavor is the flavor.

We decide the next barrage of tests should integrate the strips into a range of classic scenarios where chicken is present but does not sing the lead. We try tacos, stir-fries, wraps, cold salads, noodle soups, and a breakfast hash. We even come up with a recipe for a nugget, chopping the not-chicken finely, reforming it and giving it a crust, and then frying. The result? Most impressive. When playing with other flavors and textures, the analog is at its chickenlike best. I later serve the nuggets to my 13-year-old
daughter, a connoisseur of the form, and she doesn’t even bat an eye. Seems like a chicken nugget. I freeze them and serve them again a week later. Her response: nothing. Which is the best you can expect from a 13-year-old girl.

Although I can’t see using Beyond Meat strips in something like a piccata or coq au vin, they definitely have some advantages over real bird. They’re convenient and versatile, deliver quality protein with no cholesterol or saturated fat, and have a long shelf life. What’s more, I suspect the Chicken-Free Strips could replace chicken in at least 30 percent of the existing chicken recipes floating around out there, and that’s a few hundred thousand (depending on who you ask).

The target market? Meat eaters like me who want to cut back.

My biggest criticism concerning the strips is that they’re frozen at the factory and suffer many of the textural issues that frozen meat suffers when thawed: graininess and chewiness among them. If Brown wants his product to shine, he’s going to have to ship it refrigerated rather than frozen—which the company says it plans to do.

In the end, what’s really interesting about Beyond Meat is what’s beyond the not-chicken. Predictably, the company is working on a beef analog. But why stop there? Once you liberate the idea of flavorful protein from actual animals, the whole idea of food acquires a certain flexibility. Given the right ingredients and the right texturizing technology you could produce not-shrimp for people with shellfish allergies or not-bacon for pork-abstaining Jews and Muslims. What about imitating endangered animals so that we could eat them without wiping them out or feeling guilty? Blowfish that isn’t poisonous? No problem. In fact, you could make protein that tastes like something even better than meat or like something entirely new. Maybe people would be willing to eat cockroach slurry if it tasted like nacho cheese and chewed like filet mignon.

In one of the long phone conversations we’ve had since my Missouri visit, I ask Brown what’s to stop him from moving beyond an imitator of known meat to a creator of something completely novel. He could be a protein artist, I tell him.

Brown isn’t so sure. But he doesn’t think the future of meat is slices of animals, either. “In a few generations, vegetable-based meats may be the only meat some young people have ever experienced,” he says.

It’s an extraordinary vision of the future—and if you’re an animal advocate or a dietician, it’s perhaps the only vision worth pursuing. But on the other hand, maybe the future doesn’t require a meat analog. Plenty of people live just fine on veggies and grains. We could just lay off the real meat, right?

Not bloody likely.
Residents at two student housing complexes, Timber Ridge and Copper Beech, have complained of spider infestations at the townhomes.

However, managers and owners do not take college students seriously, said junior Andrea Sims, a resident at Copper Beech.

“I feel like they think they can ignore us, and we won’t do anything about it because we don’t care,” Sims said.

Both Copper Beech and Timber Ridge were described as having a spider infestation and units that were in poor condition when clients moved in, according to reports by Sims and Thom Baker, a local resident and father of a Timber Ridge resident.

"It was quite obvious that the apartment itself had been neglected for quite a few months, like cobwebs in the corners and food left in cabinet shelves. The floors were gross. It was just bad."

Timber Ridge, in a statement released by their attorneys, said it had “resolved the reported situations (of spraying for spiders) in less than 24 hours as verified by the City of Columbia Code Enforcement Specialist.”

Baker went before City Council on Sep. 18 to have his concerns with the housing complex addressed. He did so not only for his daughter, but for all tenants, he said.

“Our recommendation to City Council was that all rental owners or managements must give a full disclosure of all property problems with any particular apartment,” Baker said.

This would be included in a “code of conduct,” which Baker said he would like the city to display on its website. The document would be signed voluntarily by building managers and property owners.

It’s important to read the lease and talk to those who have lived at the complex before, Sims said.

“(Reading the lease and talking to current residents) is really important because we didn’t really know anybody who had lived at Copper Beech before, so we’d just heard about it but not really about any issues,” Sims said.
**Off-campus services**

*Student legal services available to help with a housing decision in student life, said Dionne George, coordinator of Off-campus Student Services.*

“I believe that if a student took the time to review the lease when red flags come up and (when) they’re not too sure what things mean, that’s a good time to set up an appointment and get some clarification before you sign,” George said.

It’s important to realize to be careful when looking for an apartment, George said.

“I know everyone is looking for the best deal,” George said. “I know everyone wants to be conservative in terms of how much money they spend, but not everything that glitters is gold.”

George advised students to avoid signing leases without reading them, especially if the language is confusing.

If the Off-Campus Student Services office receives enough complaints about a property, George said, the office is available to help students through the process of getting their complaints addressed.

“Sometimes, there’s really just a miscommunication or lack of communication on one part or another,” George said. “When students do come to us with their concerns, we really try to get them resources that they need to move forward. In the past (what we’ve done) is to reach out to some of these properties on behalf of the students to get clarification about certain situations.”

The problem is communication between property managers and tenants, and it needs to be fixed, Sims said.

“As far as what can be done, I just feel a lot of communication issues are a big deal,” Sims said. “They need to let us know what they’re going to do, especially when we contact them first.”

Olive Lefler, Copper Beech midwest regional manager, said in an email that Copper Beach regrets that some residents have had issues.

“Even though we are fully prepared for the lease turnover season, it is possible for items to get missed,” Lefler said. “We staff up for this time of year, and we have plenty of people trained to take care of issues that may arise. We also have cleaning services and other vendors on site that are contracted to help.”

Copper Beech representatives do not always hear from residents directly, but if tenants are having problems, Copper Beech is there to help, Lefler said.

“If any tenants are having problems or concerns, we are available in our leasing office daily and we have online methods for them to communicate their concerns as well,” Lefler said. “Our managers are always available to help quickly, once we are made aware of the problem.”

George said this year, the office is in the process of planning off-campus housing information sessions which will take place before the annual housing fair Nov. 13.
“We want to educate them before that event so that they just know what are some good things to look for when planning to sign a lease,” George said.

The fair will have 35-40 housing complexes for students to consider, but leases will not be available to sign at that time.

“We are here to advocate for the students and then try to ensure that properties are providing the best service that they can,” George said.
Something more than a cultural scavenger hunt but certainly not something less, the University of Missouri hosts its eighth annual Art-i-Fact Campus Gallery and Museum Crawl tomorrow evening.

The free event provides an occasion to explore MU’s grounds and discover artistic and historical treasures that have been under our noses this whole time. Art-i-Fact also offers that rarest of opportunities – the chance to become more intimate with one entity, in this case the campus itself, while having our horizons enlarged.

More than a dozen different campus venues and organizations participate and attendees are encouraged to roam leisurely from one destination to the next, take in exhibits and objets d'art, then have their crawl maps stamped, the proof opening up the prospect of winning various prizes.

This year’s theme is “Around the World, Around Campus” and participating organizations promise the opportunity to visit six continents and time-travel through seven millennia at the Museum of Art and Archaeology, supplementing that stop with various eras and ends elsewhere. Among the other times and places represented are China’s Qing Dynasty at the Missouri Historic Costume and Textile Collection and Madagascar, through ambassadors as inauspicious as hissing cockroaches housed at Enns Entomology Museum.

Among the other worthwhile stops is the Gaines-Oldham Black Culture Center, which features an exhibit curated by visionary local artist Byron Smith. Also, it’s an imperative time to visit the Museum of Art and Archaeology, before its doors close next week and its collection is put in storage in anticipation of a move to the Mizzou North complex late this year.

Additionally, the George Caleb Bingham Gallery will host a closing reception for Revealing Place, a remarkable exhibit of documentary photography I discussed here.

Participating campus organizations designed the event to draw attention to the campus’ cultural riches and provide a comprehensive experience to those who attend. And, each year they do so with aplomb. Last year, I attended the crawl for the first time and had my eyes opened to resources I didn’t know
existed. Being able to investigate the campus’ nooks and crannies was an added delight. I walked away feeling I knew the campus, my city and even the curve of civilization just a bit better.

Tomorrow evening’s event lasts from 4 to 8 p.m. View a full list of participants on the Art-i-Fact website.

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