MU police investigating reported strong-arm robbery

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 9:42 pm

University of Missouri police are investigating a reported strong-arm robbery that happened Tuesday evening near Hawthorne Hall on the MU campus.

The university issued an MU Alert at about 8 p.m. notifying the campus that a light-skinned, black man in his late teens to early 20s allegedly committed the strong-arm robbery near the sand volleyball courts by Hawthorne Hall. After the robbery, the man reportedly got into a damaged, navy minivan on Rollins Road and headed east toward College Avenue. The van had five or six other passengers at the time, university officials said.

Witnesses said the man had short hair and was about 5 feet 8 inches tall. He was reportedly wearing a white shirt, black athletic shorts and orange shoes at the time of the robbery. Police said he also might have been wearing a lanyard.

The MU Police Department continued to investigate the robbery at about 8:49 p.m., but university officials said there was no immediate threat to the campus.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU police investigating strong-arm robbery on campus

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 | 10:59 p.m. CDT

BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

COLUMBIA — The MU Police Department is investigating a reported strong-arm robbery near Hawthorn Hall, 903 Hitt St., at MU.
According to MU Alert, MU police are seeking a male suspect, about 5 feet 8 inches tall in his late teens or early 20s, who left in a damaged navy minivan on Rollins Street and headed east toward College Avenue with five or six other passengers inside.

MU students and others subscribed to MU Alert received the following in text messages and emails at 7:47 p.m.: "MUPD is working a robbery ON campus! Take precautions! MU Alert will be updated shortly. Do not call MUPD unless it is an emergency."

At 8:43 p.m., MU Alert sent text messages and emails saying that the situation had been "stabilized," and six minutes later, MU Alert's website said there was no longer an immediate threat to campus.

MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said all available information as of 10 p.m. had been posted on MU Alert's web page and Twitter account. No information about the nature of the robbery was disclosed.

He also encouraged students to contact their parents to clarify the situation and inform them of their safety.

MU police investigating robbery on campus

Watch story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=e832be89-ed6b-4744-87b5-08cacfddfe7d

COLUMBIA, Mo. - University of Missouri police say they're investigating a robbery on the MU campus.

According to the MU Alert page, a strong armed robbery took place by the sand volleyball courts near Hawthorne Hall.

Police say the suspect got into a damaged, navy minivan on Rollins Road and headed east toward College Avenue. There were five or six passengers in the van.
The suspect is described as a light-skinned, black male wearing in his early 20s, short hair, approximately 5 feet 8 inches tall. He was wearing a white shirt with a possible V-neck, black athletic shorts and orange shoes. He may also be wearing a lanyard.

Police are urging students and parents to check the MU Alert page for updates. [http://mualert.missouri.edu/](http://mualert.missouri.edu/)

Police say the emergency situation was stabilized just before 9 p.m., but the investigation continues.

No injuries have been reported.

This is a developing story. Stay with ABC 17 News and abc17news.com for updates as they become available.

MUPD investigating reported on-campus robbery

Watch story: [http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28756&zone=5&categories=5](http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28756&zone=5&categories=5)

Posted: May 5, 2015 9:18 PM by Brandon Kiley, KOMU 8 Digital Producer

Updated: May 6, 2015 12:06 AM

COLUMBIA - Missouri has alerted students of a report of another robbery on campus.

MU Alert sent a text message to students at approximately 7:45 pm stating, "MUPD is working on a robbery ON campus."

MU Alert has since updated their website to reflect the latest information.

"University of Missouri Police are investigating a report of a strong armed robbery by the sand volley courts near Hawthorne Hall on the MU campus," according to the report on the MU Alert website.
The suspect is described as a light skinned, black male in his late teens to early 20s. He has short hair and stands approximately 5 feet 8 inches tall. He was wearing a white shirt, black athletic shorts and orange shoes.

KOMU 8 talked to students who were in the area during the time of the reported robbery. Students said they did not hear or see anything strange, but they do understand why MU alert messages are being sent more often.

"I think that they're definitely being a little more touchy about everything, because a lot of people are complaining about not getting as many alerts in the beginning so they're probably just being extra cautious because people were getting upset," MU student Paige Reed said.

MU Alert has informed students via e-mail that, "the emergency alert situation has been stabilized."

---

2 robberies on MU campus


Officials have released a more detailed description of the suspect. The man is now described as a light-skinned, black male in his late teens to early 20s, with short hair, about 5'8". He was wearing a white shirt, possibly a V-neck shirt, black athletic shorts and orange shirt. The suspect might be wearing a lanyard.

The vehicle he was last seen in is a damaged, navy minivan, with five or six other people in the van.

Original Story:

**University of Missouri police are investigating a strong-armed robbery.**

The robbery happened Tuesday night by the sand volley ball courts near Hawthorne Hall.
The suspect is described as a light-skinned black man wearing light-colored shirt and shorts.

After the robbery, witnesses say the man got into a van on Rollins Road and headed east toward College Avenue.

Anyone with information about the robbery is asked to contact MUPD.

The university sent out a text alert shortly after it happened.

---

**MU freshman robbed by sand volleyball courts**

*The University of Missouri Police Department is currently investigating a “strong armed robbery,” according to MU Alert.* The robbery occurred by the sand volleyball courts near Hawthorn Hall, the release stated.

Students were notified at about 7:45 p.m., but the original alert did not provide students with the location.

“Safety is the university’s top priority and we are working hard to assure that the campus remains safe while information is obtained and confirmed,” the news release stated.

The suspect description is of a light-skinned black male in his late teens to early 20s with short hair and approximately 5 feet 8 inches tall. The man was last seen wearing a white, possibly V-neck shirt, black athletic shorts, orange shoes and possibly a lanyard.

Following the robbery, the man entered a damaged navy minivan with five or six passengers on Rollins Street and drove east toward College Avenue.

MU freshman Meghan Gray said she was the individual robbed.

“I was walking back to my dorm with my friend and I felt someone pulling on my hand,” Gray said in a Facebook message. “I turned around thinking it was some kind of joke, then I saw a guy and realized what was happening. He pulled me down, took my wallet and ran away. A guy standing by ran after him and saw him jump into a minivan with a bunch of other guys.”

Students were notified at 8:43 p.m. that the emergency alert situation has been stabilized.

The release stated MUPD was “working hard to confirm facts and maintain the safety of the campus.”
As the investigation is still ongoing, MUPD is unable to release any more information at this time, MUPD spokesman Capt. Brian Weimer said.

“We’re telling people to just refer to the site and if they could help us we’d greatly appreciate it,” Weimer said.

Security will be increased at the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house after an armed robbery home invasion early Tuesday morning that injured two members, the fraternity’s president said.

One of the victims was treated at a hospital for superficial head injuries, and the other member did not require medical attention, said fraternity President Donald Buchholz. The two fraternity brothers were watching TV when three masked men allegedly burst into their room and forced them to the floor at gunpoint.

“All of a sudden, it just happened,” Buchholz said.

The masked men allegedly ransacked the room and ran away from the fraternity house with an undisclosed amount of property. Columbia and University of Missouri police were still searching for the masked men as of Tuesday morning.

Columbia police spokeswoman Bryana Maupin said in a news release that officers responded at about 1:12 a.m. Tuesday to the fraternity house, located at 101 E. Burnham Road. She said the suspects were last seen wearing dark hooded sweatshirts and masks, with one wearing blue jeans and red tennis shoes.

Buchholz said about 50 fraternity members live in the house, and many of the men were shaken up after the incident. He said he planned to meet with all of the fraternity’s residents Tuesday night to discuss plans for increasing security.

Police ask anyone with information to call the department or CrimeStoppers at 573-875-8477 to remain anonymous.
While the house is in the jurisdiction of Columbia police, MU police Capt. Brian Weimer said his department regularly reminds students to lock their doors, even inside of residence halls.

“It only takes a few seconds to step in there and take something,” Weimer said.

Students, faculty and staff were notified of the crime via the MU Alert system, which sent out text messages and emails about the incident and issued warnings on social media. Though the incident did not take place on campus, its proximity to MU and the direction the suspects were last seen heading concerned campus police, Weimer said.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

With new technologies come new ways to cheat. Yik Yak, the anonymous, location-based app that has been a hotbed of cyberbullying on college campuses, is also the newest tool for students seeking to cheat on exams.

J. Scott Christianson, an assistant teaching professor in the department of management at the University of Missouri at Columbia, has been monitoring Yik Yak recently to see what students are talking about.

When he was on the app, he saw several yaks about an exam. It looked as if a student had just gotten out of the test and was using Yik Yak to share what he or she could remember about the questions, seemingly an attempt to provide a cheat sheet for students who would be taking it later.

In November the student newspaper at the State University of New York at Stony Brook reported that students there had used Yik Yak to share answers on quizzes and tests, especially in large lecture classes.

Given the app’s anonymity, it’s likely that Yik Yak seems a safe way to spread the word. There have been cases in which students who have threatened violence have been identified and arrested, but, to campus officials, the users are all but untraceable.

Students have found many ways to violate academic integrity over the years — this one is just more high-tech. Tracy Mitrano, director of Internet culture, policy, and law at Cornell University, says she thinks using Yik Yak in this way is not unlike seeking help from websites like Course Hero or from fraternities and sororities that are rumored to keep filing cabinets of old tests.

But Yik Yak could allow such cheating to be done on a much broader scale that’s also more difficult to police, says Jeremy Littau, an assistant professor of journalism and communications at Lehigh University who has done research on the app. With smaller networks of students, like teammates, club members, or fraternity brothers, the answers have to travel person to person. But with Yik Yak, they can reach many students at once. “That they can just broadcast this out in the open makes it a little more dangerous,” he says.
Professors could use some methods to try to prevent students from sharing information about their exams — not recycling questions, making multiple versions of tests, not passing tests back, and instead requiring that students who wish to view them do so in the faculty member’s office, Mr. Littau says.

Professors could also try to interfere with the process. Mr. Christianson says a professor or teaching assistant could “poison the well” by submitting posts on Yik Yak that mislead or misdirect students. But it seems unlikely that faculty members would take the time to do that, he says. Unlike students, professors have better things to do than troll Yik Yak.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

TIM MAYLANDER: MU Alert fails again by not delivering the details

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 | 3:43 p.m. CDT; updated 8:22 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, May 5, 2015
BY TIMOTHY MAYLANDER

Tim Maylander is a graduate student at the Missouri School of Journalism.

For me, one of the side effects of being a graduate student at MU has been a case of mild insomnia. The end of the semester only serves to heighten the effect as projects are due and graduation looms.

I’m not surprised I found myself awake at 2 a.m. on Tuesday morning. I am surprised I decided 2 a.m. was a good time to check my campus email. I was even more surprised with what I found:

“THERE IS AN ACTIVE THREAT NEAR CAMPUS! TAKE PRECAUTIONS! MU Alert will be updated shortly. Do not call MUPD unless it is an emergency.”

To clarify, I wasn’t shocked that some act of violence occurred in Columbia. Such things happen all the time. What flabbergasted me was how MU Alert handled it.

To say that the message I received was a colossal failure of communication is underselling how bad the MU Alert system has become. At this point, MU Alert does more harm than good in multiple ways. Let’s break them down.
First, start with the descriptor: "THERE IS AN ACTIVE THREAT." What does that even mean? I understand that in a crisis situation reliable information is hard to come by, but if MU Alert deemed the threat credible then someone knew what the threat was.

Since the description of the threat is so vague, I have to use context clues to figure it out. The last time MU Alert issued an email was when police shot a suspect, but they didn’t issue an alert for a credible bomb threat on campus. So this event ranges somewhere in between shots fired and buildings might have bombs in them. Got it.

I thought that maybe MU Alert was just trying to get my attention with that first segment. Surely more details were upcoming. I read on: "THERE IS AN ACTIVE THREAT NEAR CAMPUS!"

The first thought which ran through my head after reading "NEAR CAMPUS" was, "Are you kidding me? That’s the best you can do?" As Tom Warhover pointed out in a well-written editorial on MU Alert’s previous PR disaster, MU’s campus is 1,262 acres. I’m pretty sure officers weren’t sent "NEAR CAMPUS"; they were sent to a specific location. Not including even a hint of the location is irresponsible and dangerous. I live less than a mile from a corner of campus — is that "NEAR CAMPUS?" Or what about my friends who live in Brookside? For that matter, is there a part of Columbia that isn’t "NEAR CAMPUS" in some way?

Next, MU Alert did their part to keep me safe by telling me to "TAKE PRECAUTIONS!" The thing is, it’s hard to take precautions when I don’t know what the threat is. It’s even harder to take precautions when I’m not told what precautions I should take.

I attend one of the finer institutions in the country, so I’m already smart enough to lock my doors and windows. Do I need to move my softball bat to my nightstand? Sleep with one eye open?

At this point I had more questions than answers, which is not what I want from a system that is supposed to provide me with emergency information. Then I checked the time stamp: The email was sent at 1:28 a.m., and it was almost 2:30 by this point. In that hour MU Alert didn’t find any of those pertinent details the email so desperately needed?
I found that hard to believe, so I hopped on Twitter to find more info. That’s about the point where I completely lost it.

At 1:43, MU Alert tweeted the following: "We are aware of an assault & robbery at 101 Burnam Ave (Phi Delta Theta frat) and are investigating the situation."

So in 15 minutes, MU Alert was able to pinpoint the exact threat and location where the incident took place — information that was available when police were dispatched to the fraternity at 1:12 a.m. But the campus community was never notified of those details via email. The message was only delivered through Twitter.

Words cannot describe how harebrained, reckless and downright stupid that decision was. It was a complete disregard of common sense and only served to create an even more dangerous situation than what already existed.

The email gave me no useful information whatsoever and only managed to confuse me. But MU Alert wasn’t done for the evening.

At 2:41 a.m. I received an email letting me know that "the situation that caused officials to declare the emergency condition has been stabilized and campus is now clear to resume normal activities."

At this point, people reading the emails or texts from MU Alerts would still have no idea what "the situation" was. Also, what does it mean that the situation has been stabilized? There’s a huge difference between the campus is safe and "the situation has been stabilized."

For a university that has one of the premier journalism schools in the nation, it is completely unacceptable for MU Alert to be as useless and poorly managed as it is. In a crisis situation, the important details have to get out as soon as they are verified — and sometimes even before then.

To top matters off, I’m signed up to receive text alerts from MU Alert, but I’m one of the many students who doesn’t get them even though I’ve verified my phone number in MyZou multiple times.

The bottom line is MU Alert has an obligation to keep people safe and informed, and it currently fails miserably at both those tasks. This isn’t the first screw up, either; three times in the past three weeks MU Alert has come under fire, and rightly so.
It’s an impossible task to get right 100 percent of the time, and I don’t envy the people who make decisions on what gets sent out and when. But pardon me if I’m not calmed by the @Mizzou account sending out kissy emoticons to students in regards to "the situation" before I get an email telling me what "the situation" even is.

Editorial: Biggest university failure: MU Alert

MU Alert has made a series of high-profile faux pas in the past month.

The system’s basic function is to alert students to any “personae non gratae” in the vicinity of the campus. Any potentially violent or harmful event is supposed to be noted and relayed to the student body via mass alert texts and emails, and even phone calls for some.

One would think that a bomb threat or armed and dangerous perp on campus would warrant an alert text. One would think our vigilant security personnel, the guardians of our well-being, would spring into action upon the first inkling of menace.

Alas, no. This kind of dutiful diligence has been lost on the operators of MU Alert. There was indeed an armed and dangerous perp on campus grounds April 15. Police eventually confronted and fatally shot the suspect in Hitt Street Garage. But students did not hear anything of the perp’s presence until 11:26 p.m., nearly five hours after the initial tweet from the Columbia Police Department about the armed robbery downtown. The perp was already dead by the time students were notified.

One week later, an anonymous caller called the MU Student Center saying there was a bomb somewhere in the “student union.” As a precaution, students were evacuated from the Student Center. Some time later, Memorial Union was evacuated as well.

There was a flurry of activity on Twitter during and after the evacuations. The bulk of the commentary wasn’t related to the bomb threat; rather, it was snide jabs at MU Alert. Students were decrying the lack of proactivity by the administration, which did little to disseminate news of the bomb threat outside of scant social media postings.

In other words, students who didn’t happen to tune into the Twittersphere during the hours of the bomb scare were hung out to dry. Administrators’ formal excuse for withholding an alert text about the bomb threat was that the “threat was isolated.”
Administrators cannot assume anything. They cannot assume information will be spread, especially if their error can lead to the endangerment of students.

If that was the sincere result of following protocol, then the protocol needs to change. On a campus of 34,000 students, that kind of callous nonchalance, concerning the armed gunman and the bomb threat alike, is simply unacceptable.

Editorial: Biggest Disappointment: Administration’s handling of race relations

Take a walk through the heart on the Francis Quadrangle and you’ll notice there’s a lot of repairs taking place on Red Campus. Lafferre Hall is finally undergoing renovations after years of soaking up water leaks with buckets and Tupperware. Jesse Hall, once overflowing with visitors and special events, has been hollowed out for a facelift. Swallow Hall has been disemboweled completely, and officials estimate that work will continue into early 2016.

Right across the chancellor’s own front yard is Pickard Hall, which was vacated last year after the Nuclear Regulatory Commission found low levels of radiation leftover from when chemical experiments took place there in the early 20th Century. These structural problems are some of the most visible on campus, but they are hardly the biggest issues plaguing MU today.

For too long, many top MU administrators have taken the passenger seat in driving conversations to address campus climate and race relations instead of leading them.

We’ve seen some progress in the past few years, like the creation of One Mizzou under then-Chancellor Brady Deaton and the open forums hosted by Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. But administrators only gave these issues their full attention after acts of hatred and discrimination prompted dozens of student protests.

After taking heat from frustrated students in December, Loftin vowed to listen more closely and “create action plans” to address the campus climate.

Five months after the first forum, Loftin has continued to listen, but we’ve hardly heard him speak or take action to cool off tensions that have only built up since the events in Ferguson highlighted systemic racial divide both here and elsewhere. In fact, we’ve only seen more hatred toward marginalized groups emerge from the discussion around the “American Sniper” screening and incidents of anti-Semitism.

Many of Loftin’s biggest critics accused him of being too “reactive” and urged a more proactive approach to tackling these problems. I am not by any means implying the chancellor does not
care enough to address this issue, but I agree; the administration’s way of addressing campus climate has lacked assertive and decisive leadership.

Students should not have to protest at the chancellor’s doorstep in the rain to see reform start to take place. Change should not always have to follow a traumatic event like cotton balls strewn outside the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center.

And when students talk about senseless bigotry on campus, we don’t want to see our chancellor throw his arms up in the air and proclaim, “I don’t have the power.”. But the chancellor does have the power. He can introduce new programs and policies, and help create a safe campus environment for constructive dialogue.

What’s more disappointing is that the ‘Bowtieger’ also has the power to influence over 22,000 people on Twitter with a few clicks on his phone. I wrote in last year’s Mizzou in Review that Loftin’s social media following is one of his greatest assets as a leader because it gives him the power to influence. But he has so far neglected to use this influence to rally students for positive change.

That’s not to say Loftin completely ignores students on Twitter; he frequently retweets messages from campus organizations and marginalized groups, and replies to student feedback. But I’d like to challenge the chancellor to do more with this incredible power he has. I want to see Loftin ask students what they would like to see on campus and raise awareness about serious concerns on campus as much as he tweets about Mizzou Athletics.

Additionally, any reform that does come out of the forums and students’ Call to Action will require long-term direction as discussed during the April 29 forum, which was lacking in past administrative actions. Even One Mizzou lost momentum after its honeymoon phase, which prompted the Missouri Students Association to pull its funding for the initiative because of its “lack of vision.”

Implementing meaningful reform is a marathon, and administrators should take care to ensure today’s efforts do not burn out tomorrow.

Students are sick of the game of whack-a-mole in which administrators only act in response to peripheral problems. Loftin said in a press conference that some responsive action is necessary. I agree with the chancellor, but that should not be the only way to heal what he called “a great deal of hurt” on campus. If we are not reaching the root of these problems, we will never see the end of hate speech and discrimination on campus.

Administrators must listen to students. They should shift the way they think and operate so they can begin to develop policies that enhance the cultural competency of our students and proactively make campus a more inclusive environment for all students.
Editorial: Top 5 race relations forums

On Nov. 24, 2014, a grand jury in Ferguson, Missouri, decided not to indict officer Darren Wilson for shooting and killing 18-year-old Michael Brown. Brown’s death in August of that year led to much unrest around the nation.

At MU, incensed students banded together to form MU4MikeBrown. Events held by this organization and others, combined with growing tension nationwide, prompted administrators to hold a series of forums on campus.

The following race relation forums are not placed in any particular order.

1. Ferguson Listening Session, December 1

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin hosted a Ferguson Listening Forum on Dec. 1 in Memorial Union after students expressed their frustration that administration had yet to address campus race relations. The event featured students’ impassioned pleas for a proactive administrative response to growing racial tension on campus as opposed to a reactive one. Overall, administrators said they were moved by students’ stories. Loftin released a statement the following morning, in which he vowed to continue listening and create action plans based on student feedback.

2. Snowed in

Another open forum was scheduled for Feb. 16, but it was canceled when campus was closed due to snow. Administrators initially postponed the race relations forum, but it was eventually canceled after administrators claimed they could not find a suitable space to hold the forum at a later date.

3. Open forum, March 18

Anger was the overtone of this forum. Students criticized administrators’ lack of action since December’s listening session. Faculty Council established a committee on race relations, but it hasn’t held its first meeting by this time. Students seemed to key in on and criticize MU’s lack of diversity. Loftin said that there are “far too few faculty of color” at MU after pointing out that fewer than 10 of the school’s 2,000 faculty members are Hispanic. Since this forum, MU has published a transparency website with the goal of sharing information about progress on initiatives to improve campus climate.

4. Call to Action Progress Report, April 29

Conservation Auditorium was barely half full when Loftin began his presentation April 29. Roughly 30 minutes of the hour-and-a-half-long Call to Action Progress Report forum was
dedicated to presenting how administrators have responded to student requests. Administrators from various departments talked through PowerPoint slides, highlighting several steps they’ve taken to improve race relations on campus, including discontinuing the university’s One Mizzou marketing slogan and making more efforts to recruit marginalized students from the “inner city.” After administrators were finished with their presentation, student queued up to ask questions on either side of the auditorium. Student after student challenged administrators on their presentation. They approached the mic with pages of feedback and powerful or insightful comments were met with snaps. The administration went to great effort to directly address student requests, but only one thing was clear by the end of the night: There is still much to be done.

5. Next forum: TBD?

It is currently unclear whether another forum will take place during the summer or fall semesters. One student at the March forum suggested that forums not only continue but extend to other areas of campus, specifically to Greektown. However, Loftin did not allude to a future forum during April’s meeting.

The secret to preventing and slowing down Alzheimer's? Green tea and jogging

A cup of green tea followed by a jog could stave off or slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease, a study claims.

Researchers discovered a green tea extract, called ECGC, slowed the progress of the condition when combined with physical activity.

Mice allowed to exercise after being given ECGC showed 'remarkable' improvement in cognitive function and memory retention.

And the University of Missouri researchers now believe further study of a particular compound in the drink could lead to new treatments for the illness.

Grace Sun, professor of biochemistry at the University of Missouri, said: 'Oral administration of the extract, as well as voluntary exercise, improved some of the behavioural manifestations and cognitive impairments of Alzheimer's.'
Plaques and tangles in the brain are two of the main features of Alzheimer’s disease. The third is the loss of connections between nerve cells (neurons) in the brain.


'Symptoms can include increased memory loss and confusion, agitation and a lack of concern for your environment and surroundings.

'We looked at ways of preventing or postponing the onset of the disease which we hope can eventually lead to an improvement of health status and quality of life for the elderly.'

Increased inflammation has been linked to Alzheimer’s and recent studies have suggested the benefits of dietary antioxidants in reducing the risk.

So researchers decided to investigate the effects of voluntary exercise and epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), a green tea extract, on memory function in mice.

They also examined the effects on A-beta levels.

The mice, exhibiting symptoms of the disease, underwent a series of tests in which they had to move round a specially constructed maze and later build a nest.

Professor Schachtman said: 'Mice exhibiting symptoms of the disease had nests that were poorly formed or erratic.

'Furthermore, we found that mice with Alzheimer's symptoms, much like people, can be apathetic about their habitat, or have forgotten how to 'nest' appropriately.'

The mice were then given ECGC in water and given access to running wheels. Their cognitive function was found to have improved.

The mice brains were then analysed to determine the effects of EGCG and exercise on A-beta levels in affected regions of the brain.

Professor Sun said: 'We were excited to see a decrease in A-beta levels in the brains of the affected mice as well as improvements in behavior deficits in mice with Alzheimer's.

'Consumption of natural products as potential remedies to prevent and treat diseases and to maintain human health is an ancient one.

'Further study of the commonly found extract could lead to advancements in the treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease in humans.'

The research was published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease.
Could cake and chocolate cause Alzheimer's disease?

New research suggests sugary foods such as cake and chocolate may be the cause of Alzheimer's disease.

In the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, researchers from the Washington University School of Medicine wrote that high blood sugar levels could have "harm effects on brain function and exacerbate neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's disease".

The study, which used mice, found that high levels of blood sugar increased levels of amyloid beta, which is the main ingredient of plaque found in the brains of Alzheimer patients.

High blood sugar is often found in those who ingest large quantities of sweet, sugary, foods and lead author of the study Shannon Macauley said: "Our results suggest that diabetes, or other conditions that make it hard to control blood sugar levels, can have harmful effects on brain function and exacerbate neurological conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease."

"This observation opens up a new avenue of exploration for how Alzheimer’s disease develops in the brain as well as offers a new therapeutic target for the treatment of this devastating neurologic disorder."

Another recent study from the University of Missouri found that green tea could potentially have the ability to slow down Alzheimer's disease. The study, which also used mice, found progression of Alzheimer's could be decreased or halted completely with the use of a green tea extract called ECGC.

In the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* the researchers wrote: "Consumption of natural products as potential remedies to prevent and treat diseases and to maintain human health is an ancient one.

"Further study of the commonly found extract could lead to advancements in the treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease in humans."
Op Ed: The Missouri legislature versus the university

By MICHAEL UGARTE

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at 2:00 pm

An interviewer asks a job applicant if he or she speaks, reads or writes a foreign language. The interviewee answers proudly that he/she can communicate in computer language, adding that the university that granted the degree included computer language on its list of foreign languages.

Missouri House Bill 1085, proposed recently by Mark Parkinson, R-St. Charles, requires that computer programming be considered a foreign language in public universities, and as such it could be used to satisfy the foreign language requirement.

My first reaction to this proposal was: Are you kidding me? And my second was worse: The Missouri General Assembly is made up of a bunch of yahoos, clueless about the world, unaware of reality, content to listen only to themselves and those who agree with them — sort of like what they think of professors. This just confirmed what I always thought: Politicians are in the same category as used-car salesmen and bookies.

But that kind of reaction doesn’t get us very far. Maybe this bizarre proposal for “reform” of university curriculum allows residents of our state to ponder why institutions of higher learning require students to study a foreign language, along with natural sciences, social sciences, math and other humanities, to attain a college degree. The conventional thinking is that universities should train the up-and-coming generation for a job, and of course this is understandable, indeed desirable. But is that all? I don’t think it’s incongruous, and certainly not uppity pie-in-the-sky thinking, to ask that this new generation, those who will determine the future of our country and our planet, be aware of cultures not their own. And when I say cultures, I’m talking about ways of using language — different sounds, different ways of saying things, different ways of thinking. I’m convinced that if we had more understanding of cultures not our own, we as a nation would be in a far more desirable condition than we’re in at the moment.

Moreover, I am not the only foreign language professor who has heard students say that language courses have taught them about their own language: parts of speech, relations between words, how to put a sentence together, meanings directly linked to a specific culture and a history. Computer language resides far from that discipline. Not that it shouldn’t be taught or that we shouldn’t enhance it in our cyber-age. But let’s ask ourselves as citizens and benefactors of our
Another aspect of this legislation that bothers me is the lack of confidence that some of our lawmakers seem to have in our university’s ability to organize its own affairs. Again, not that legislators and non-university citizens should not offer input or that they should not be involved in university affairs — many of us welcome that input. I, for one, think it doesn’t happen enough. But forcing a doctor (of medicine) to treat a patient in a way he/she sees as wrong is not good policy.

Another proposal — Senate Bill 465, requiring universities to post syllabi on their websites — further manifests this lack of confidence, although this one is not as “off the wall.” In fact, I’m sure we can find professors who agree that university course material should be accessible to all. Many professors, myself included, would welcome an individual request by the parent or even the friend of one of my students to describe what I’m doing in a certain course. I’d be glad to send anyone a syllabus I designed with the stipulation that in most cases you need a certain level of Spanish proficiency to understand it.

But the reason I’m against SB 465 is that I don’t trust the motivations of those who are proposing it. It’s a bill with an agenda that goes far beyond a desire for transparency. It provides an opportunity for those determined to question, debunk, attack and diminish the pedagogical and research projects of university professors. I don’t think the effects will be positive; rather, we will have more of the same: animosity and lack of understanding.

In short, we need more communication, but communication in good faith, a dialogue whose goal is to enhance knowledge and broaden horizons.

Michael Ugarte is professor of Spanish at the University of Missouri and a Kemper Teaching Fellow.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Elizabeth Upton remembered for kind heart, open mind

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 | 9:14 p.m. CDT; updated 12:54 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, May 6, 2015

BY CLAIRE LARDIZABAL

COLUMBIA — Elizabeth Jane Upton, of Columbia, died early Sunday morning, May 3, 2015. She was in the passenger seat of a car when it lost control on a curve on Creasy Springs Road. She was 18.

Elizabeth was born Oct. 21, 1996, in Columbia to Gary and Marilyn Upton.
She graduated from Rock Bridge High School in December and enrolled at MU for the spring semester to study textile and apparel management. She would have walked across the stage with the Rock Bridge Class of 2015 in June.

During her junior year of high school, she studied abroad in France through the Rotary International Student Exchange Program. She planned to return to France this summer to work.

Megan Stober, Elizabeth's classmate and a Rock Bridge senior, said she met Elizabeth at Mill Creek Elementary School and attended the same dance class growing up.

"Her smile was so big and beautiful, and her happiness was transferred onto everyone who was around her," Megan said. "She had a great sense of humor, and she was so adventurous."

One of Elizabeth's former teachers at Rock Bridge, Michael McGinty, asked his class to write remembrances earlier this week.

The collection begins with a poem McGinty wrote: "These words carefully assembled won't work to do what they were meant to do, to tell a story of a life that was and now is not.

"These words carefully assembled won't work to reflect her smile and intellect and cherub cheeks and bright clear eyes and ebullient walk. They won't do to tell her story."

McGinty noted Elizabeth wrote with passion and wisdom, much like she carried herself and lived her life.

"She had a curiosity about people, places, stories, poetry and all things that appealed to her intellect," he wrote.

One student shared a journal entry from third grade about how much he loved being friends with Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth will forever be remembered as a smart, beautiful explorer who had so much potential," a student wrote. "All of us are just blessed to get to experience a little bit of her ray of sunlight."
McGinty said another student shared a poem by Elizabeth that ended with, "You're alive, for them, we all are. Living extra, because they cannot."

Yet another said Elizabeth helped get her through a tough time: "She would slip notes on my desk randomly telling me how happy she was to be my friend and that I was in her life."

Elizabeth Upton is survived by her parents, Marilyn and Gary Upton Jr.; a brother, Alex Upton; grandparents, Gary and Martha Upton, and Ronald and Dorothy Pizzey, all of Arlington, Texas; her aunts and uncles, Dave and Melanie Pizzey and Barry and Shelley Williams; and cousins Zach Pizzey and his wife, Amy, Lauren Pizzey, Caitlin Williams and Colin Williams.

Elizabeth's life will be celebrated from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday in the Lela Raney Wood Hall Kimball Ballroom at Stephens College. Memorial contributions can be made to the Rotary International Student Exchange Program during the memorial or directly to the organization, Rotary International, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL, 60201-3698.

Condolences can be posted at memorialfuneralhomeandcemetery.com

MU brainstorms uses for Blair’s $1 million estate gift

Missouri alumni Timothy Blair recently donated $1 million to the journalism school. The money is intended to support education and research about how journalists cover LGBT issues.

Blair said he spent the past two to three years discussing potential donation ideas with MU development.
“I was looking at items of interest that I felt a certain passion about,” he said. “As we narrowed it down, the issue of the connection between democracy and journalism became something that I was particularly interested in.”

Blair said that he left the donation relatively open-ended in terms of how it is to be spent so as to not limit the ideas of those passionate about the issue.

The donation is an estate gift, which means it will not be available for use until Blair’s death. It will presumably be awhile before administrators can use the money, given that Blair is 63. However, administrators have already begun brainstorming possible uses for it.

"The LGBTQ community isn't often incorporated into the daily fabric of local news,” said T.J. Thompson, president of the MU chapter of NLGJA. “Many media outlets use wire services and only localize their coverage when an LGBTQ issue seeps into the national consciousness. As such, Blair's generosity could foster and support proportionate and sustained local LGBT coverage through grants, contests and scholarships.”

Currently, journalism students are required to take a cross-cultural journalism class in which they learn about LGBT issues among other things. The one of the focuses of the class is realizing that the LGBT community is a part of the greater community, and is impacted by many of the same issues as everyone else.

“It’s about not looking at them as the ‘other’ or different from everyone else in society,” cross-cultural professor Earnest Perry said. “They are a part of the overall picture in which the journalism is trying to present.”

Although these issues are currently being discussed, Perry thinks this money could lead to a deeper exploration. He believes the money will be best spent on developing the curriculum and finding faculty with expertise in handling LGBT issues in journalism.

“The gift is meant to help us financially in doing a better job of teaching students how to cover communities that are different from those that they come from.” Perry said. “When you’re out there as a journalist you want to tell those stories from the perspective of the people you're talking to, not the story that’s stereotypical.”

However the money is used, Blair hopes it will inspire other schools to follow suit.

“Hopefully it’ll trigger other journalism schools and communication programs to look at this as an area of important study,” Blair said.
The Nepalese Student Association comes together to raise money for earthquake victims

On April 25, a massive earthquake struck Nepal, killing over 7,000 people.

The Nepalese Student Association decided to help. Nepalese exchange students Raghav Poudyal, Suman Gurung and Saroj Dhital have started to raise funds for victims of the earthquake and raise awareness on MU’s campus in hopes of making a difference.

On May 1, the three held a candlelight vigil in commemoration of those who lost their lives or are suffering in Nepal.

To raise funds for the disaster, Poudyal said the organization will table at the MU Student Center to collect monetary donations until next Wednesday. They also plan on hosting cultural programs to bring the Nepalese community together, he said.

The money donated will be sent to humanitarian organizations that provide food, shelter and medicine for victims of the earthquake.

“We have been talking to groups and organizations working in rural parts of Nepal,” Dhital said. “We’ll channel the raised funds to these organizations so we have more control over where the funds go.”

The Nepalese Student Association would like to extend fundraising efforts to the city of Columbia, Dhital said. They are currently working to get a fundraiser permit from the city.

Many of the Nepalese students’ families were affected by the earthquake, Dhital said.

“We all have families and friends back home still,” Dhital said. “A lot of Mizzou Nepali students’ relatives have lost their homes. Some of them have lost their lives and almost all of them are traumatized. This event has affected us all as we are constantly worried about (the) situation back home and its really hard to focus on our studies. But we’re staying strong and doing the best we can do to support the victims.”

Raghav was one of the students whose family was affected by the earthquake.

“My father and mother had to sleep outside on the streets for six nights,” Raghav said. “We were lucky in that our house was not destroyed but a few of my extended family have lost their homes.
Over the last week, this is what I have been through — I was shocked, I was frightened, I became hopeful and now I am determined.”

In addition to their efforts to provide relief, the students hope to spread knowledge of Nepalese culture.

“We have realized that we have not done much in terms of promoting our culture and diversity here at Mizzou,” Raghav said. “We want to organize programs that showcase our traditional dances, songs and other arts. We want to familiarize people with Nepalese cuisines. We hope that programs like these will help us to reach out to those who don’t know much about Nepal.”

The student body has so far been receptive, Raghav said. “I have been overwhelmed by the support from family and friends here,” Raghav said. “Although this catastrophe destroyed the lives of many, a lot of people have come together to help the affected. And that’s beautiful and very inspiring.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Commission tasks MU Truman School students to analyze county roads and bridges

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 | 8:50 p.m. CDT; updated 8:59 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, May 5, 2015
BY WILLIAM SCHMITT

COLUMBIA — It may be common to take roads and bridges for granted, but they need money and attention to ensure they remain drivable. Boone County commissioners have acknowledged that maintaining public infrastructure can be a problem, especially in a growing county with limited funding opportunities in the near future.

In order to strengthen the bridges in Boone County, Boone County Presiding Commissioner Dan Atwill reached out to Barton Wechsler, dean of the MU’s Truman School of Public Affairs, hoping to build a better bridge between the county and MU.

Atwill said he wanted to know what other states and counties are doing to keep roadways properly paved and to ensure that bridges don’t fall down. Four MU students took the opportunity to structure their capstone project around funding for county transportation amid lagging financial support.
The students — Ryan Betz, Claire Donze, Kyle Olmstead and Adam Schmid — gathered with commissioners Tuesday morning to deliver their findings and to suggest additional ways of generating revenue for infrastructure. The students used the opportunity as a springboard as they graduate and start careers in the field of public policy, and the commission plans to use their presentation to drive future conversation.

Schmid was especially jazzed about the prospect of creating a "Boone County Infrastructure Bank," a revolving loan-fund that could help villages, towns and cities around the county address their road needs.

Schmid said the commission wasn't looking for a single answer from the students, just for them to address "a general decline" in infrastructure funding. The study suggests that attacking the situation from multiple angles would be the county's best bet.

Indeed, there were no "dramatic super-answers" in the presentation, Atwill said, but commissioners said they appreciated the students' time and effort. He said commissioners understood that finding one method of generating a lot of money for roads and bridges was unprecedented.

"There's no silver bullet out there," Southern District Commissioner Karen Miller said.

Atwill added after the presentation that it was important for the county to rely on MU when it could: "We have all these resources at the university ... I think we should use them when we can to advance the interests of the county."

**Boone County infrastructure capstone**

Students interviewed representatives from nine counties similar to Boone — with populations between 80,000 and 230,000, a single metropolitan city, a large university and sustained population growth over the past decade with continued growth expected in the next 10 years. They included:

- Lancaster County, Nebraska (University of Nebraska, in Lincoln)
- Tippecanoe County, Indiana (Purdue University, in Lafayette)
- Champaign County, Illinois (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
- Douglas County, Kansas (University of Kansas, in Lawrence)
The students found that two-thirds of the counties surveyed pay for their own roads and bridges. Lancaster County cited an inability to raise taxes as a challenge to pay for infrastructure projects, while Douglas County found a tough task in "keeping consistent funding through periods of no obvious 'distress' to the roads."

Students outlined four common avenues to raise revenue for roads:

- Increased levels of intergovernmental cooperation
- The aforementioned infrastructure bank
- State-level solutions, such as raising the tax on gasoline
- Transportation development districts

**Commissioner reactions**
Commissioners were intrigued by the presentation but tempered their enthusiasm about some of the students' suggestions. Atwill said reaching out to the Truman School showed the potential to "foster more cooperation between citizens and the county."

One of the students' primary conclusions is that the county needs to improve communication among all its government entities.

Miller said the county is trying to boost intergovernmental cooperation, citing past road projects on Angel Lane in Ashland, Rolling Hills in Columbia and roads in Sturgeon. She expressed her doubts that Boone County would go as far as a city-county merger, however, saying that such an alliance was "politically not very feasible."

Miller said she didn't think the county could expect solutions to come from the state. For instance, she said, she doesn't think a bill to raise gas taxes, proposed by state Sen. Doug Libla, R-Poplar Bluff, would make it through the House of Representatives.

She added that the idea of an infrastructure bank was "interesting" but said she wasn't sure it would be in the county’s best interests to spread around its money to surrounding municipalities instead of using county money to maintain county roads.

Northern District Commissioner Janet Thompson supported the students' efforts. She noted that when it comes to public roads, "everybody's impacted, not just the county commission."
The students will fan across the country in two weeks. Betz plans to work in the Mississippi Delta region, and Donze expects to start working as a liaison with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Schmid is going to head to the Northeast U.S., while Olmstead said he'll either go to California or stay in Columbia.

The students, however, might not be finished in Boone County. Commissioners asked for the students' email addresses, and Donze said the students could send more supporting documents if the commission ventures down the roads they suggested.

Professor Zezang Gu and research team finds antioxidant properties in garlic

*Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, along with other neurodegenerative aging and diseases, could potentially be prevented by simple dietary measures, MU School of Medicine researchers found in March.*

A research team, led by Zezang Gu, associate professor of pathology and anatomical sciences, experimented with aged garlic extract and documented its effects on the brain’s immune cells in the presence of stress. Brain-damaging stressors could be pollution, brain injury, alcohol consumption or the aging process.

Other studies on garlic have focused mainly on the sulfuric component of the nutrient, which gives its potent taste and smell, as a source of an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Gu’s research focuses on the preservative responses from a carbohydrate derivative of arginine amino acid from garlic called FruArg. The report was published in the peer-reviewed online publication, PLOS ONE.

The tests involved microglial cells, immune cells in the brain and spinal cord that are the first line of defense in the central nervous system, according to the news release the MU School of Medicine posted March 26. They respond to an injury or stress and are able to multiply quickly. However, the response increases the levels of their emitted nitric oxide, which can lead to cell damage and stimulates neurodegeneration.

For those with no background in technical biological jargon, here’s a layperson’s perspective. Many things cause stress in the body, including eating, exercise and disease. This causes the microglial cells in the brain to react and possibly over-oxidate and cause damage. This study shows that garlic extract and FruArg can reduce the number of oxygen species produced and reduce the stress level. The hypothesis, then, is that if the stress can be reduced, something can be done about the onset of stress-related diseases in the brain and elsewhere.
Grace Sun, MU professor of biochemistry with a focus in oxidative stress, provided the team with the microglial cells.

“We used immortalized microglial cells and isolated them for testing,” Sun said. “We are very happy with these cells.”

The team put the cells in a culture dish and simulated stress by adding an endotoxin called lipopolysaccharide. This activated the microglia’s production of reactive oxygen species, a natural response as part of the body’s redox system, a biological system of reduction and oxidation to maintain homeostasis, or balance, in the cells. Aged garlic extract and FruArg compounds were then added and tracked to see what proteins of the stressed system were changed through mapping the molecular pathways.

“We are expecting FruArg and aged garlic extract to help manage the redox systems,” Gu said.

Pathway analysis found that around 70 percent of the protein concentrations that changed were the same between aged garlic extract and FruArg and had an antioxidant property. With the help of FruArg and the extract, stress-response systems may be controlled and reduce damage from too much oxidization, which is linked to Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative conditions.

“The conclusion becomes that a lot of the same proteins changed by the extract are changed by the FruArg,” said Michael Greenlief, director of the MU Proteomics Center. “That means FruArg seems to be changing the stress reaction systems and is a useful component in garlic.”

The next step is learning how to implement the research into a dietary recommendation, Gu said.

“If it all pans out, a garlic supplement could be a good thing,” Greenlief said.

Individuals and families affected by neurodegeneration, then, may soon find some control in their increasingly devastating situations. According to the Alzheimer’s Association website, every 67 seconds someone is diagnosed with the disease in the U.S. Alzheimer’s involves damage to the 100 billion nerve cells of the brain and interferes with connectivity, leading to increasing confusion and behavioral changes.

Each year, Parkinson’s disease, the damage of dopamine-producing cells in the brain, is diagnosed to 50,000 to 60,000 new cases, according to the National Parkinson Foundation website.

“What we are doing is really a public interest study,” Gu said.

Gu and his team are also encouraged by the unique structure and efficiency of their research plans.

“The exciting part is that we are using ‘systems biology,’ or looking across an entire line of proteins in the cells to find the more predominant actions of the compounds,” Gu said. “Previous
studies looked for a single pathway under a defined hypothesis. Ours is a broader and unbiased look into the interactions of multiple pathways.”

The “actions” Gu refers to are what is believed to have a healing effect, though Gu said there needs to be more research. According to Gu, this study is fundamental and has more opportunity for growth.

Future experimentation with aged garlic extract and FruArg may also be extended to other areas of the body as similar studies of immune responses. Gu and his colleagues intend to study the nutrient’s properties in relation to cancer, inflammation and diabetes among other conditions.

Much of the funding and support for the work, and future developments, comes from the National Institutes of Health. A grant from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicines, the Office of Dietary Supplements, and the National Cancer Institute assisted funding as well.

Diversity Awareness Partnership of St. Louis branches to Columbia

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 | 6:39 p.m. CDT; updated 8:49 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, May 5, 2015

BY TIMOSHANAE WELLMAKER

COLUMBIA — An organization dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion awareness is opening an office in Columbia.

Based in St. Louis, Diversity Awareness Partnership coordinates training, engagement, awareness and networking opportunities in an effort to bring people of different cultures and perspectives together.

The Columbia location is the organization's first regional expansion, said Nikki McGruder, who will be the branch regional manager.

She said one of DAP’s most successful efforts came in response to events last fall in Ferguson, Missouri. The organization created an awareness campaign that brought more than 1,000 people together in community sessions in the St. Louis region.

"This event exposed people to the need for dialogue over debate," she said.
The sessions offer ways to answer difficult questions as well as learn the difference between debate and dialogue — between arguments and conversation.

The partnership is set to host an event to celebrate the opening of the Columbia branch from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday at Bleu Restaurant, 811 E. Walnut St.

DAP is a non-profit organization that began in 2001, three years after a survey of St. Louis residents indicated that 89 percent of those who responded would help make the region more inclusive if they knew how.

In St. Louis, the organization has worked with sports franchises, middle and high schools, colleges and universities, the legal community, banks and public utilities.

"The DAP in St. Louis has had over 14 years of diversity programs and initiatives," McGruder said.

**MU has recently encouraged a race relations dialogue of its own in forums held by administration.**

McGruder said DAP wants to help improve Columbia's community by providing diverse networking, inclusion and training, as well as education.

"It is one thing to celebrate diversity and another to intentionally focus on inclusion," she said.

Panera ridding food menu of more than 150 artificial ingredients

By Lisa Brown

Some ingredients that Panera is eliminating from its food menu — titanium dioxide, calcium peroxide and benzoic acid — sound as though they belong in a science experiment, not a panini or lettuce wrap.

And that may be the point, as the restaurant chain moved aggressively Tuesday to associate its offerings with more healthful, more natural fare.
Sunset Hills-based Panera, known locally as St. Louis Bread Co., announced it will banish more than 150 artificial preservatives, sweeteners, colors and flavors from its soups, sandwiches and other foods it sells at its more than 1,900 bakery-cafes by the end of 2016.

The ingredients are identified on what Panera calls its “No No List.” Included are high-fructose corn syrup, which is being phased out, and aspartame, which is not currently used. The chain said it’s the first national restaurant company to publish a list of unacceptable ingredients.

The barred artificial ingredients apply only to food items, but the chain is considering expanding the ban to beverages as well, said Sara Burnett, Panera’s senior quality assurance manager.

Panera had first announced its plans to cut all artificial additives from the food menu in mid-2014, but it didn’t detail which ingredients it planned to target.

“Last year we unveiled our Food Policy to hold ourselves accountable to long held values and set the future vision for our vision,” CEO Ron Shaich said in a statement Tuesday. “The No No List is the latest step on our journey to clean food and a transparent menu.”

The company led the industry in 2010 when it began displaying calories for menu items long before other chains and introduced antibiotic-free chicken in 2004.

“It has been an evolution for us, and it’s been about 10 years coming,” Burnett said. When making the switch to antibiotic-free chicken, the company was driven by taste, she said. “We found that simple, less-processed food often tastes better.”

In one example of what’s changing, artificial smoke flavor used in smoked cheddar cheese will be replaced with naturally smoked cheese.

“Our goal is that this will not impact taste at all,” Burnett said of the ingredients that are being phased out. “Even without all these ingredients, we can create great-tasting products.”

Of the 460 ingredients used in its food menu items, about 168 are being reformulated to remove additives, she said.

“I’m not here telling anybody that a specific chemical is going to cause cancer in two weeks,” Shaich told Bloomberg News. “What I know is — in a world where no one knows and lots of reasonably smart people are concerned — I’d rather not have my kids eat it and I’d rather not serve it to guests at Panera.”

Tuesday’s posting of Panera’s barred ingredients occurs as other companies change recipes to reflect what some consumers are avoiding.

Last week, Chipotle said it stopped using genetically modified organisms, GMOs, in its foods, and the chain is working to phase out the use of artificial ingredients from its tortillas.

PepsiCo also said this month that it will stop using aspartame in Diet Pepsi, and instead use another artificial sweetener, sucralose, known better by its brand name, Splenda. Sucralose is among ingredients Panera is eliminating.

“They wouldn’t be doing it without consumers’ attitudes changing about what they’re eating at restaurants,” Morningstar analyst R.J. Hottovy said of Panera’s decision to cut artificial additives. “In the past two years especially, consumers are prioritizing healthier, organic items, and it’s becoming a larger part of their overall purchase decision for a lot of consumers.”
Panera has spent the past year looking at hundreds of ingredients used in its foods and reformulating recipes, the company said.

About a year ago, Panera reached out to EWG, a Washington-based nonprofit research and advocacy group that has compiled what it calls a list of “dirty dozen” additives that the group says should not be in food, EWG’s president and co-founder Ken Cook told the Post-Dispatch.

“They seemed to be very open to hearing the views of academics and nonprofit groups that have raised questions, not just about safety, but whether they’re necessary,” Cook said of the additives. “Panera has really staked out a leadership role for something that’s really sweeping the industry.”

Panera also announced Tuesday that its salad dressings no longer contain artificial sweeteners, colors, flavors or preservatives, including on its new kale caesar salad and its popular strawberry poppyseed and chicken salad.

UBS analyst Keith Siegner said in a recent research note that a new marketing campaign Panera will launch in June will likely tout the changes to its menu items.

“We’re encouraged by food innovation that gets back to the basics, (with) core menu — salads, dressings, sandwiches — focused around healthfulness and higher quality ingredients,” Siegner’s note said.

Many on social media applauded Panera for dropping artificial ingredients, including @ichriscrabtree, who tweeted Tuesday: “I hope the rest of the American food industry will follow suit;” and @The_Slim_Miss, who tweeted: “Our Panera obsession just got way healthier.”

However, customers should be warned that eliminating common preservatives will reduce the shelf life of foods they take home, said Andrew Clarke, an associate professor of food science at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

“There was a purpose for adding them,” he said. “The quality of the doggy bag left in the fridge is probably going to suffer.”

Editorial: Biggest buzzkill: Closing Rollins to shuttles

Public transportation — well, there’s a thing of nightmares. Especially COMO Connect, the city-owned public bus system that pushed private apartment complex shuttles out of the MU Student Center stops.

With pressure on students to take city buses, congestion on campus streets might have decreased, but, with fewer transportation options, congestion within the city buses left many students standing, seatless and squished.
What is worse than waking up in the morning and taking a shuttle to your way-too-early 11 a.m. class, you might ask? Waking up in the morning and boarding a city bus filled with randos, City Council answered, presumably with a smirk. What an idea.

MU students who signed leases in a number of off-campus housing complexes were contractually promised usage of free private housing shuttles. These shuttles, catering specifically to MU, its students and their schedules, run at more favorable times than COMO Connect, which serves the public as a whole. Again, what is worse than waking up for your 11 a.m. class and catching a private shuttle that runs every 15 minutes or so? Waking up at 9:20 a.m. to catch a 10:20 a.m. city bus to campus that doesn’t run again until 10:55 a.m., which if you took, would definitely make you late but sometimes it’s worth it just so you don’t have to be waiting on campus for an extra forty minutes for a class you don’t want to be in anyway, City Council answered, presumably while twisting their one, collective handlebar mustache of government.

This transportation switch-up came after City Ordinance 14-180 was put into effect this fall, prohibiting nearly all private vehicles from using sections of Rollins Street, Hitt Street, Ninth Street, Conley Avenue and Missouri Avenue from 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on weekdays. With Rollins Street being city-owned, the prohibition of private vehicle presence outside of the Student Center was a decision to be made by the city. Alternate routes for private shuttles were created at locations like Strickland Hall and Memorial Union, but only after this legislation was strictly enforced with no notification or collaborative notice given to MU and its students.

To the credit of City Council as well as MU officials, a collaborative effort between the two was dedicated to quick, consolidated, efficient transport of students with emphasis on traffic safety, something that, with the number of campus traffic accidents that have taken place in the past few months alone is always an important measure to give consideration.

As students at MU we are lucky enough to have access to a unique city and a homey college town and it is important for us to remember that these things are merely additions to our beautiful campus. In the case of CoMo, it is sometimes best to simply go with the FlowMo.

Columbia City Council votes down student housing complex

By Caitlin Campbell
Although an 850-bed student housing project on the east side of town has divided residents and city officials for more than a year, the Columbia City Council easily shot down the proposal at its Monday night meeting.

But being rejected a second time has not persuaded the developer to give up on the Columbia student housing market.

New-York based developer Park 7 Group asked the council to rezone more than 30 acres and approve a development agreement and preliminary plat for about 45 acres near Highway 63 and Stadium Boulevard. The council voted down all of the requests by a 6-1 margin, with Fifth Ward Councilwoman Laura Nauser as the sole dissenting vote.

The council rejected plans for the project, dubbed “The Avenue at Columbia,” once before, in February 2014, because of concerns with the project intruding on nearby neighborhoods and encouraging urban sprawl.

A revamped plan garnered the split approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission as well as nearby neighborhood associations on the conditions that a 10-acre forested buffer and additional road improvements be included at the developer’s expense. Harold Johnson, president of the Shepard Hills Improvement Association, said the “generous” 10-acre buffer showed the developer’s concern for the neighborhoods nearby.

Council members who voted against the project said they appreciated the developer’s efforts, but they could not support another dense student housing project on the city’s periphery.

Mayor Bob McDavid said Columbia has failed to adequately prepare for the growing student population and keeps putting students in complexes too far from campus, which presents a host of transportation issues.

“There are plenty of opportunities to move these students closer to the university,” McDavid said.

Several representatives for Park 7 Group spoke in favor of the proposal and said they would ensure all safety, infrastructure and transportation worries were addressed. The developers offered a private shuttle service and the purchase of 321 CoMo Connect bus passes for tenants to alleviate traffic congestion.

“On a more fundamental policy level, I also don’t think it’s appropriate to dictate where a certain demographic has to live,” said local attorney Caleb Colbert, who spoke on behalf of the applicants.

Several University of Missouri students said they did not want to pay higher prices in a time of rising college costs to live in poorly built, luxury student housing with amenities they do not need.
Missouri Students Association member Syed Ejaz said the student governing body found students were very concerned with housing prices. Ejaz said students are told apartment complexes have low vacancy rates and are “filling up” in an effort to trick the students into acting quickly and paying a higher price.

“The consumer buys into an artificially inflated price,” Ejaz said.

Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas said he would like to see future development proposals be “less intense” and offer more diverse housing options, with better management of transportation.

Sixth Ward Councilwoman Betsy Peters, who represents the ward where The Avenue would have been built, said the vote was a difficult decision for her. She said as she read comprehensive planning documents for the area, she found the development to be too dense, with too many students in one place.

First Ward Councilman Clyde Ruffin, a professor at the university, said the school already is freezing faculty positions and using more adjunct professors and teaching assistants to fill gaps. He said he has concerns about the university’s growth and that the city needs to reassess how it handles student housing.

“I can easily imagine the day will come where there will be a crisis moment where they have to stop and consider their practices for increasing enrollment in light of how we may be able to teach these students,” Ruffin said.

Mark Farnen, local spokesman for Park 7 Group, said the enrollment numbers at the university had been on an upward trend and that current estimates that enrollment will reach 39,000 students by 2019 are conservative. He said more high school students are going to college, the university is attracting more out-of-state students and retention rates have improved.

“I believe the council just made a big mistake with a lot of unintended consequences by not developing outside of downtown,” Farnen said after the vote. “If something were to happen and a student housing ‘bubble’ were to burst, we would see that happen at other universities in Missouri before ours.”

Farnen said Tuesday that Park 7 still is interested in the Columbia market, but any future proposals will not involve the land where the company wanted to build The Avenue. “As of now, that land is back on the market,” Farnen said.

Nauser said she voted to approve the project in 2014 and wanted to remain consistent. She said the city is taking the periphery out of the equation and now only has two options for student housing going forward — downtown or in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown.

“For those people close to campus: You’re next,” Nauser said.
It took the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, on average, 1,469 days to complete campus sexual assault investigations in 2014, according to data released Tuesday by three Senate Democrats. The average time it took to resolve a complaint in 2009 was 379 days.

This past winter, Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, Barbara Boxer and Tim Kaine wrote to the department requesting more information on how the Office for Civil Rights investigates complaints that colleges have mishandled cases of campus sexual assault. The office is currently investigating more than 100 colleges over allegations that they failed to fairly investigate and adjudicate cases of sexual violence as they are required under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

In a reply sent to the senators in April, the department said that a shortage of staff and a massive increase in the number of complaints -- spurred by the federal government's increased focus on the issue -- has left the office scrambling to complete an ever-increasing caseload with far fewer resources.

The senators said the duration of these investigations illustrates why Congress should increase the office's funding.

OCR attempts to complete its investigations in 180 days, Catherine Lhamon, assistant secretary for civil rights at the department, and James Runcie, chief operating officer for federal student aid, said in the letter. But cases are often open far longer than that. The average length of investigations completed in 2015, so far, is 940 days.

“These cases need to be resolved more quickly,” said S. Daniel Carter, director of the VTU Family Outreach Foundation’s 32 National Campus Safety Initiative. “It is not justice for anyone when an investigation lasts so long. Steps need to be taken to expedite these investigations. Ideally, the department should try to come much closer
to that stated goal of 180 days. Frankly, that needs to happen.”

Last year, OCR concluded several of its longest-running investigations. An investigation at Harvard Law School lasted four years, as did an investigation at Ohio State University. Investigations completed last year at Princeton University and Southern Methodist University lasted about three years.

That the department finally wrapped up these lengthy cases is part of the reason 2014 saw such a spike, OCR said. In 2013, the average length of an investigation was 478 days.

“This explains in part why the average duration of Title IX sexual violence investigations has been higher in recent years,” the letter stated. “OCR expects that these averages will decrease as the agency closes out its oldest sexual violence cases and if, as we hope, Congress increases OCR’s appropriation to allow OCR to manage its current and projected caseload.”

The office still has four ongoing sexual violence investigations from 2011 -- at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Michigan State University, Wittenberg University and the University of Virginia -- as well as one from 2012 at Arizona State University. Nearly 20 cases from 2013 remain open, and dozens of new cases are opened every couple of months.

The total number of colleges actively being investigated by OCR for sexual violence complaints stands at 106.

From 2009 to 2014, the number of sexual violence complaints filed under Title IX increased from 9 to 102, the department said. As of early April, 51 complaints had been filed in 2015. And those are just Title IX complaints about sexual assault on college campuses. The office also handles complaints dealing with a variety of other civil rights issues including admissions, employment and athletics. Their jurisdiction includes elementary and secondary education and covers discrimination based on gender, race, national origin, age and disability.

In the letter released Tuesday, the department said that sexual violence investigations are taking much longer to complete than other kinds of civil rights investigations because the cases “tend to be complex and may involve systemic, campus- and institutionwide issues, in addition to issues pertaining to specific students.”

During remarks at the Education Writers Association conference in Chicago last month, Arne Duncan, U.S. secretary of education, admitted that department was having trouble keeping up with the influx of complaints. “We’re having staff capacity issues,” Duncan said.

OCR received nearly 1,000 civil rights complaints in 2014, according to the office’s annual report, released last week. That’s triple the number of complaints it received in 1980, when its staff was more than double in size. From 1980 to 2014, the number of full-time OCR staff members fell from 1,148 to 544.
Carter said while the problem has been exacerbated in recent years due to the influx of cases and the reduction in staff, the length of Title IX investigations into campus sexual assault has been “a long-standing challenge.”

“Sexual violence investigations dating back for at least ten years have always taken an inordinate amount of time,” Carter said. “The office’s goal is 180 days, but in many cases, the investigations take a year or two to complete. With the current caseload of 100 cases, which is more than triple than what it was two years ago, it is simply impossible for the same amount of people with the same resources to process anything in a timely manner.”

A report released in February by the American Council on Education said that the length of many OCR investigations has the “effect of paralyzing institutional efforts to improve policies, since it may be unclear what policy changes will satisfy OCR and will be required before investigations are completed and resolutions reached.”

In February, President Obama asked Congress to fund a 31 percent increase in the budget of the Office for Civil Rights to deal with, in part, the influx in sexual assault investigations. The department said it would use the additional funding to hire an additional 192 investigators and 8 support staff to handle complaints and conduct proactive investigations.

The increase would bring OCR staff levels to about what they were in the 1990s, when it received about one-half the number of complaints.

“The Department of Education lacks the resources to promptly investigate the few complaints against schools that are filed,” Senator Gillibrand said in a statement. “This data is the latest example of why we need to flip the incentives so that schools properly address the problem of sexual assault on their campuses, and make sure the Department of Education has the funding it needs to enforce the laws, review complaints and help prevent campus sexual assault.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Resurgence of an old, deadly game has schools and families worried
Wednesday, May 6, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

BY JILL DEUTSCH

COLUMBIA — "Game" seems like the wrong word for something that can kill you, but that’s what kids call it.

The game they're talking about is "the choking game," or "the knock-out game," in which kids choke each other or themselves until they pass out for a short time. When the child
regains consciousness, he or she experiences a rush of blood to the head, and with it, a brief high.

It's been around for a long time, but now the game is celebrated in YouTube videos, so it’s even easier to find out about it and how to play it.

Late last month, Columbia Public Schools sent out a letter to parents warning them that some kids have been playing the choking game. Students at Two Mile Prairie Elementary School and West Middle School said other students were talking about the game during the week of April 20, according to district spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark.

For Neecy Jarman, it’s a reminder that not enough people know about the game, which she is certain was the cause of her son's death at age 13.

Story continues: https://www.columbiamissourian.com/a/188449/resurgence-of-an-old-deadly-game-has-schools-and-families-worried/

May 6, 2015

Coming to a Campus Near You: ‘American Sniper,’ and Hard Conversations

By Andy Thomason
College Park, Md.

NO MU MENTION

Since its release, in January, the film American Sniper has been a vehicle for heated conversations about national pride or, depending on your politics, shame. And this spring, many of those pointed discussions have played out on college campuses, where the film has generated protests, counterprotests, and hard conversations about religion, race, and violence.

At the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor last month, a student group canceled a screening of the film after a petition circulated objecting to its portrayal of Muslims.
Counterprotests caused the college to put it back on, but in "a separate forum that provides an appropriate space for dialogue and reflection." A similar petition circulated at George Mason University, but a three-day screening went ahead, and some students organized to demand the film be screened again. At the University of Maryland’s flagship here, complaints from the Muslim Students Association had prompted a student group to postpone a screening scheduled for earlier this month. But the college was then deluged with angry messages from supporters of the film, and the campus’s College Democrats and College Republicans stepped in to sponsor a screening followed by a panel discussion.

The swirling controversy in College Park presented a visceral picture of how college students take sides in, and can sometimes struggle to make sense of, battles that cut across a range of sensitive subjects at the fault lines of American society.

A surprisingly high number of the people I talked to for this article hadn’t seen the film, so here’s a spoiler-free primer: It tells the story of a former Navy SEAL, Chris Kyle, who was the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history. Based on an autobiography Mr. Kyle co-wrote, the movie chronicles his four tours of duty in Iraq and subsequent struggles to readjust to civilian life.

In the film, Mr. Kyle, played by Bradley Cooper, does a lot of killing. The way those on the other end of his rifle are portrayed is at the root of why the movie has been the target of protests. In its petition, Maryland’s Muslim Students Association argued that the film "dehumanizes Muslim individuals, promotes the idea of senseless mass murder, and portrays negative and inaccurate stereotypes."

"MSA members were right to speak up for what they believe in," the university’s president, Wallace D. Loh, said in a statement to the campus about the screening. He went on to praise for its sensitivity the group that postponed its planned showing of the film, and the College Democrats and College Republicans. "Working together, despite differences in philosophy and doctrine, is a laudable example for us all," Mr. Loh wrote.

Roses and Slogans

Downstairs in the student union on Monday evening, past the Panda Express and the Chick-fil-A, the scene was civil but not quite the collegiate ideal Mr. Loh envisioned in his message.

Students in hijabs reached into a box of roses and gave them out to anyone with a free hand. Evidence of recent weeks’ controversy was tied, literally, to the flowers themselves. Words like "raghead" appeared on slips of paper attached to their stems,
quoting comments the Muslim Students Association said it had received after speaking out against the film. On the back were polite messages the group sent in response.

Looking on and handing out tickets was Breyer Hillegas, president of the university’s College Republicans, who said the Muslim-student group had brought the backlash on itself "from their desire to censor the movie."

Students took roses and lined up outside the Hoff Theater. On the other side of the hall, students from the Muslim Students Association and other groups stood with handwritten signs. "MLK was killed by an American Sniper too," one of them read.

Another declared:

If you like American Sniper you may also like:
— Racism
— Murder
— KKK
— Holocaust
— Fox News

Campus police officers shuffled by, asking the protesters to clear a space in the middle of the hall for passers-by. In a small lobby through the doors, a group of students had set up a table where attendees could write thank-you letters to members of the armed services.

At 6 p.m., the theater was about half-full as the lights went down. The movie began with the crackling sound of a Muslim call to prayer and a hulking American tank rumbling over a pile of rocks and sand.

The film’s treatment of Arab people is far from nuanced. Very few, if any, of the Iraqi characters are treated sympathetically or with even a shred of complexity. They lurk behind corners with rocket launchers, or endear themselves to American soldiers while secretly siding with a sadistic terrorist butcher who is, at one point, depicted taking a power drill to a young boy’s skull.

The racialized, us-versus-them spirit is hardly new in American war cinema, said Robert K. Chester, a lecturer in the department of American studies at College Park. He hadn’t seen American Sniper, but when I filled him in on what I perceived as the film’s thin portrayal of Arabs, he wasn’t surprised.
"That’s a fairly consistent pattern. It just changes according to the times," he said, citing dehumanizing film portrayals of Native Americans in Westerns, African-Americans in Birth of a Nation, and the Japanese people in World War II films.

A war film is a particularly affecting use of a powerful medium because it purports to bring history to life. For that reason, Mr. Chester said, a director must be conscious of the fact that moviegoers’ perceptions of American wars will be colored by the film, if subconsciously. "Contemporary people didn’t fight in World War II, but they sure as hell remember the opening sequence of Saving Private Ryan," Mr. Chester said. "Film has a great deal of power and potency to claim authority on the past."

It’s no surprise, then, that the presentation of controversial Hollywood films on college campuses can raise eyebrows. So Michael Kossin, a Maryland senior who sat next to me during the film, saw the decision to tack an organized discussion onto the screening of American Sniper as a prudent one. On the one hand, he supports free speech absolutely, he said, but on the other, the representation of wars on film is rarely honest. "It’s always gonna be worse than the movies make it," he said.

Opinions and Discomfort
The panel discussion was uncomfortable, apparently by design. "We really invite people to sit, and to sit with discomfort," Kumea Shorter-Goeden, the college’s chief diversity officer and the panel’s moderator, told the crowd that stuck around for the discussion.

She got her wish. One panelist, David E. Vogt III, a Republican member of the Maryland House of Delegates and a former Marine, derided the recent unrest in Baltimore as a misuse of free speech that he said soldiers like Chris Kyle had fought to protect. His remarks did not sit well with some members of the audience, steeped in the Black Lives Matter movement, who had just spent two hours watching a white man in uniform shoot dark-skinned people.

From that moment, the question of racial treatment loomed large. "I was trying to keep count," said another panelist, Michael O. Spivey, a lecturer in College Park’s department of government and politics. "I’m not sure I ever saw a positive treatment, or even ambivalent treatment, of any of the Iraqis."

Dawud Walid, executive director of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, who served in the U.S. Navy, worried about the cumulative effect of insensitive portrayals of Muslims on American public opinion, citing the recent killings of three Muslim students by a white man in Chapel Hill, N.C.
Throughout, a racially diverse crowd of students snapped and clapped in approval at sentiments they liked and angrily whispered objections to friends when they disagreed. When it was over, they stepped out of the theater, some tossing their roses into the trash can. In the food court, only the McDonald’s was still open, and groups of students held court nearby with games of chess and cards.

Many attendees left the building to get on with their Monday nights. But some stayed behind, just outside the theater doors, to keep up the conversation.

Andy Thomason is a web news writer. Follow him on Twitter@arthomason.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU doctoral student in physics confronts visa policy, college loans
Tuesday, May 5, 2015 | 4:40 p.m. CDT; updated 1:12 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, May 6, 2015
BY RYAN COLLINS

COLUMBIA — When Menzi Mchunu made an emergency trip to South Africa in December 2010 to visit his father in the hospital, he expected to return in January and resume work on his doctorate in physics.

But Mchunu's visa was held up for almost four months, delaying his studies and teaching duties until the last week of the 2011 spring semester.

When Jesse Kremenak heard that story, he was blown away.

"I thought to myself, 'Wow, this is a crazy situation. It's probably just a one-time thing,'" he recalled.

Then he heard about Yiya Chao, another graduate student in physics who became caught up in a visa policy web when he went back to China. His return to Columbia was delayed for almost a month.

These stories plus at least a dozen more helped steer Kremenak on the path of advocacy. In 2013, he began drafting federal legislation that would allow...
international students to renew their visas in the United States instead of in their home countries.

U.S. Rep. Sam Graves, R-Missouri, told Kremenak that Graves will introduce proposed legislation based on Kremenak's bill during this session of Congress.

In addition to advocating changes to visa regulations, Kremenak has dedicated himself to several other causes, including an effort to reduce the government's profit on graduate student loans.

On top of this advocacy work, Kremenak is in his fifth year of a doctoral program in physics. He said his academic responsibilities put a constraint on the time he has available, but he feels the advocacy work is worth finding room in his schedule.

"Nobody's expecting me to do it," he said. "There's a lot of external pressure saying, 'Hey, you need to focus on your Ph.D. and move on and get out of grad school,' but I feel like I'm in a situation where I can actually help people."