Gap in Kids' Food Program Can Put Families at Risk

By KRISTOFOR HUSTED

Generated from News Bureau Press Release: Age Limit for Federal Food Assistance Program is Increasing Food Insecurity

Listen to the story: http://mms.tveyses.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=0a3c8383-ab0e-4596-b621-faa7fe697b

Story ran on the Here and Now program on the following NPR affiliates:
Milwaukee Public Radio
WWNO- New Orleans, LA
KUT- Austin, TX
WUNC- Raleigh, NC
WHYY- Philadelphia, PA
WESA-Pittsburgh, PA
WDDE- Philadelphia, PA
WYPR-Baltimore, MD
WBFO- Buffalo, NY
WAMU- Washington D.C.
Greek life at Mizzou faces greater scrutiny, with more to come

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1 hr ago

ST. LOUIS • This has been a semester marked by damning revelations about the problems within Greek life at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Tales of a vodka-chugging contest at fraternities, date-rape drug allegations and multiple students transported to the hospital for being overly intoxicated have grabbed headlines in recent weeks.

It’s a splash of bad publicity that might not have come to light were it not for an incident in September.

That’s when a few students leaving a Legion of Black Collegians meeting said that a white female student used racist, offensive language toward the students.

The event spilled into a verbal altercation outside of the Delta Upsilon fraternity house. While administrators continue investigating this specific incident, the Legion and the fraternity have since announced they’re working together to build an understanding.

The incident channeled interest, especially among the media, toward fraternities, triggering a series of public record disclosures by the university.

It’s not that the school year is any different from most with poor behavior from Greeks on campus. Nor is there evidence that Mizzou’s problems with Greek organizations are any more severe than those at other schools.
In fact, the top student affairs leader at Mizzou is encouraged by the progress Greek life is making. She said fraternity and sorority leaders were committed to improving awareness and training.

“We have seen changes, but those changes are incremental,” Cathy Scroggs, vice chancellor for student affairs, recently told the Post-Dispatch. “There’s sort of a ‘two steps forward, one step backward’ phenomenon that we’re seeing.”

But there’s no doubt the Greeks are facing more public and media scrutiny. That’s been true for the campus as a whole in the past year, following a series of race-related protests on campus last fall.

The released documents shed light on a few recent cases that led to severe sanctions of two fraternities.

For example, alcohol violations from Kappa Alpha Order were among the reasons — including hazing allegations — Mizzou administrators opted to withdraw recognition of the fraternity for the foreseeable future.

A records request also unearthed a letter to Delta Upsilon from Mizzou’s top Title IX official outlining an allegation brought to the university that fraternity members gave pledges date-rape drugs and instructed them to use the pills to sexually assault women. The university will not disclose what came of the allegations, which the fraternity said were unfounded.

The larger Delta Upsilon organization decided in November to pull its Mizzou chapter until 2018, because of multiple alcohol violations.

Documents released by the university also highlight ways in which the university is attempting to change Greek culture for the better. Those initiatives include an unannounced auditor showing up at different times for house inspections, reporting findings back to the Office of Greek Life.

But more revelations about the school’s Greek system are coming.
The university soon is expected to release a batch of records that outline almost two years of investigative reports on all fraternities and sororities.

‘Nobody is untouchable’

Sophomore Drew Callahan was ready to be social chair of Delta Upsilon next year.

Amid concerns from national leadership, he and other chapter leaders recently wrote up plans to revitalize their chapter and get back in the organization’s good graces.

It didn’t matter though. When Mizzou chapter leaders met with people from the larger fraternity a few weeks ago, the decision was made to scrap the fraternity and start anew come fall 2018.

Callahan said he and his peers were frustrated they hadn’t been allowed to speak on their own behalf sooner, particularly about the date-rape drug allegations made against the fraternity this semester, which he called “absurd.”

“People drink a lot and don’t always realize it,” he said. Callahan acknowledged though that with so many people involved in Greek life, there are bound to be a few bad apples who might do such a thing. But he decried the idea that a malicious act such as drink-spiking would be organized by fraternity leaders.

There’s also some degree of believing that one’s organization is infallible.

“Sigma Chi and Beta [Theta Pi] are known as the untouchables,” he said, describing a few of the larger organizations. “We were too, for a while, but nobody is untouchable anymore.”

Callahan said fraternities today are expected to conform to norms that tighten enforcement from alumni leaders. That, in part, led to the demise of the Mizzou chapter.

But he concedes that to some extent there could be a culture problem. Records from other fraternities suggest that’s the case, highlighting numerous incidents involving excesses in drinking and questionable behavior.
Minutes from one fraternity’s meeting during April 2015 identify a member who “hooked up with a black fat girl.” Minutes from other meetings highlight other sexual escapades — some in detail.

Notes from a document about an incident in September at a separate fraternity detail one female student drinking to the point that she couldn’t open her eyes.

And an April letter from an alumni leader at another fraternity to Mizzou administrators highlights concerns alumni had for years about the performance of that chapter. According to the letter, “membership reviews” were planned for the spring.

In September, Mizzou administrators investigated at least one case in which a woman drank too much, including beer at that same fraternity’s party, and was later hospitalized.

‘Straight shooters’

Scroggs, the vice chancellor for student affairs, wouldn’t speak to specific incidents highlighted in records requests, but pointed out that each chapter completely cycles through its members every four years.

“I am continuously encouraged by our student leaders,” Scroggs said. She called the efforts she’s seeing from leaders with peer education and advocacy “sustainable” through the turnover of students.

For Callahan, he understands what his former fraternity is doing, despite disagreeing with the decision to cut the chapter.

“They want a culture of guys who aren’t actively drinking or smoking pot,” he said. “I’m not defending that that’s the way to go, but it is [part of] the college experience. As long as you’re not harming anyone, what’s the problem?

“They want absolutely no drinking or pot in the house — clean guys, straight up, straight shooters. That’s fine, but it’s unjust to us.”
Until Delta Upsilon regains its status, its pledges can opt to rush another fraternity instead.

For active Delta Upsilon members such as Callahan, fraternity days as a student are over.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Probiotics might be good for stress as well as stomach, study suggests**

ALEXANDRA COUNCIL, 14 hrs ago


COLUMBIA — You and a zebrafish might have something in common.

When humans are stressed or anxious, they emit cortisol, the same hormone anxious or stressed zebrafish release. Cortisol is the primary stress hormone and it suppresses the digestive system, the reproductive system and growth processes, according to the Mayo Clinic's website.

*A recent MU study used zebrafish to study the effects of Lactobacillus plantarum, a common probiotic found in yogurt and other fermented foods.*

"We were interested to see if Lactobacillus plantarum can affect mental health as well as digestive health," said Daniel Davis, the assistant director of the MU Animal Modeling Core.

The study found that the probiotic helped reduce anxiety-related behaviors and stress levels in the fish.

Probiotics are bacteria with beneficial health effects, said Aaron Ericsson, director of the MU Metagenomics Center and a research assistant professor in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology.
They benefit the body by helping to decrease the bad bacteria in the gut and keep a balance between good and bad bacteria, according to Cleveland Clinic’s website.

Probiotics usage has quadrupled between 2007 and 2012, according to the 2012 National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health report.

In 2012, about 1.6 percent of U.S. adults used probiotics and prebiotics. About 3.9 million adults used probiotics, nearly 3 million more than in 2007, according to the report.

"We know probiotics are good for us," said Elizabeth Bryda, a professor of veterinary pathobiology in the MU College of Veterinary Medicine. "We just don't completely understand how."

How to stress a fish

The researchers were able to administer the Lactobacillus plantarum in the tank's water without touching the fish, preventing any extra stress factors that could affect the fish.

Then, the researchers performed two different tests. The novel tank diving test involved removing fish from their tank "with all their friends" and placing them in an isolated tank. Sixteen fish were controlled and the other 16 were supplemented with Lactobacillus plantarum.

"When a fish is introduced to this novel tank for the first time, it exhibits this anxiety-related behavior where it spends most of its time at the bottom of the tank," Davis said.

The fish with the supplement spent more time at the top of the tank, exhibiting less of the anxiety-related behavior. The fish without the supplement spent more time at the bottom of the tank.

"Naturally, fish want to explore their environment searching for food, however, there might be predators out there," Davis said. "This conflicting decision of whether to explore the top of the tank or not is described as anxiety-related behavior."
In the next study, the researchers separated the other fish into four groups of 12 and introduced environmental stressors like overcrowding, isolation, changes in the water temperature and draining small amounts of water.

One group was the control group, the next was the control group with stressors added. The third was the supplemented group, and the fourth was the supplemented group with added stressors.

For one week, a different stressor was introduced twice a day, but never at the same time. Davis said this unpredictable part was done to mirror human stressors.

"You can't predict when you're going to be stressed or what that stressor is going to be," Davis said. "If we would have used the same stressor each day, then a habituation could have occurred."

The study found that there was an alteration in the composition of the gut microbiota in the untreated fish, but the fish that received the probiotic seemed to be protected from the stress-related alteration of their gut microbes.

The untreated, stressed fish had more variations in their bacteria than those supplemented with the probiotic, Ericsson said.

The variations in the gut microbes are similar to those that are sometimes seen in humans who have gastrointestinal symptoms when stressed.

"If you figure out what part of your diet contributes to the lack of Lactobacillus plantarum, you may be able to alter that part (of your diet)," Ericsson said.

It's not necessary to eat more yogurt or fermented foods to receive the benefits from probiotics. There are various probiotic capsules in stores that don't contain lactose for those who are lactose intolerant or don't want to be bothered with adding a special food to their diet, Davis said.
"After we understand what happens a little more, and this is tested in other organisms, yogurt (and other probiotics) might be able to be supplemented for other drugs related to stress or anxiety-related disorders," Davis said.

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The number of confirmed and probable mumps cases at the University of Missouri has grown to 228.

The University of Missouri released the latest numbers Wednesday as students take finals before heading home for winter break.

Health officials say they plan to continue monitoring cases over the break and through January. The school also is recommending that students receive a third dose of a vaccine that protects against mumps, as well as measles and rubella.

The school says most of the sickened students have recovered, with at least 190 of them no longer infectious.

Mumps is a viral infection that causes swelling in the salivary glands and cheeks. The university is among several across the nation that has grappled with outbreaks this year.
MU mumps cases rise to 228

COLUMBIA - 228 cases of mumps have been identified on the MU campus, according to the University of Missouri Student Health Center.

190 of the 228 cases are considered "recovered," which means they are no longer infectious to others. The cases represent less than one percent of students, the health center said.

Most of the cases come from students with friends who have mumps, affiliation with Greek organizations or interactions with local bars. All infected students met the immunization requirement of two measles, mumps and rubella vaccines.

The Student Health Center said it will continue to monitor case reports during winter break and late January to determine the need for future measures to control the outbreak. It continues to recommend MU students obtain a third MMR vaccine.

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=fa9896c0-32a0-48b5-b413-22ef24043a5e
Most Colleges Will Change Overtime Policies Despite Judge’s Blocking of New Rule

A majority of colleges will proceed with at least some of the changes they’d planned to comply with a new federal rule on overtime pay that was blocked last month by a federal judge, according to a survey of 495 institutions by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources.

The new rule, which had been expected to take effect on December 1, would increase the pool of employees eligible for overtime pay, from those earning up to $23,000 annually to those earning up to a threshold around $47,000. Colleges spent much of the past year identifying which of their employees would become eligible for overtime pay under the new rule, and how to budget for those changes accordingly.

But when the judge blocked the rule, saying the Labor Department had exceeded its authority and ignored the intent of Congress in issuing the policy, colleges were left with a few options: Move forward with changes they’d planned to comply with the rule, or delay them.

The survey by the human-resources association found that 28 percent of institutions intended to carry out all changes they’d planned. Thirty-two percent said they would make some changes and delay others, and nearly 32 percent will delay all changes. Only 8 percent said they’d roll back or reverse some or all planned changes.

The survey results also show that public institutions are more likely to reverse planned changes than are private institutions, and least likely to carry out all changes.
The policy shift most likely to be made by institutions that said they’d selectively carry out and delay changes is to raise the “salaries of one or more professional positions above the threshold,” the survey found. And the change most likely to be delayed or placed on hold was “reclassifying one or more positions from exempt to nonexempt,” a reference to which jobs would be covered by the new rule.