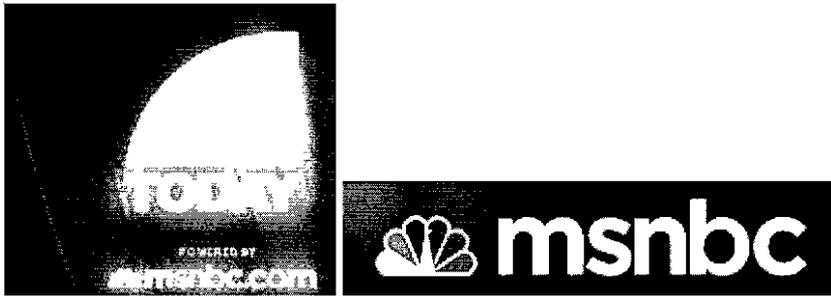


APR 08 2011



1 in 3 students say cheating can be justified

By SCOTT MARTINDALE THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER
The Orange County Register
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One in three college students believe cheating can be justified in certain circumstances, including by rationalizing that a class is unreasonably difficult or a teacher is incompetent, according to a University of Missouri study that sheds new light on why teens across Orange County and beyond continue to be caught in high-profile cheating incidents.

The study found that the most common way students justify cheating is through "denial of responsibility," such as by saying that they "accidentally" plagiarized, that they had too much to do and too little time, or that an exam was beyond the scope of the course.

The findings, presented at a conference last week in the United Kingdom, are based on an anonymous survey of 420 undergraduate students.

"It is important to be realistic about cheating," the study said. "Even though a majority of students indicate that cheating is never justified, other students appear willing to cheat at the drop of a hat. Instructors still need to keep in place reasonable measures to detect cheating, and to take appropriate action when it occurs."

About 36 percent of students said cheating was justifiable in certain circumstances, according to the study. And while the majority of students (61 percent) said cheating was never acceptable, 6 percent of those same students cited situations later in the survey that would justify cheating.

A recent high-profile cheating case in Orange County underscores the need for vigilance by teachers and administrators.

Last month, former Tesoro High School student Omar Khan, 21, of Coto de Caza was given 30 days in jail after pleading guilty to five felony counts for breaking into his Las Flores school repeatedly as a senior to change grades and steal tests.

His co-defendant and friend, Tanvir Singh of Ladera Ranch, had pleaded guilty to one felony count 2-1/2 years prior and was given probation.

When Khan and Singh were charged in June 2008, prosecutors released a transcript of a text-messaging conversation between the two, offering rare insight into what was going through the heads of two 18-year-olds involved in an elaborate cheating plot.

The following text messages were exchanged May 19, 2008, just before the duo broke into English teacher Alyssa Di Somma's classroom, according to prosecutors:

Singh (4 p.m.): Hey wana go to the school tonight.

Singh (4:02 p.m.): come haha I need someone with balls there with me.

Singh (4:04 p.m.): go into disomma I have a huge test on a book tomorrow I haven't read and its not on spark notes.

Khan (4:11 p.m.): some pussies did a senior prank last night so its gonna b really risky.

Singh (4:12 p.m.): we will go at like 7 so its not shady. Such a gay prank. Haha wow.

Khan (4:24 p.m.): Ya wow. call me when you want to go.

Khan (8:46 p.m.): You coming?

Singh (8:46 p.m.): Yeah

That same year, in response to an anonymous tip, 10 seniors at Trabuco Hills High School in Mission Viejo admitted to cheating on their Advanced Placement statistics and macroeconomics exams. The findings prompted a probe by the test's national administrator and later led to the invalidation of 385 students' exam scores because administrators failed to follow national testing protocols. The principal was removed from his post over the flap.

In the University of Missouri study, the second most commonly cited justification for cheating was what researchers termed "denial of injury" -- that is, rationalizing that the cheating didn't cause great harm despite being explicitly prohibited.

No. 3 on the list of justifications for cheating was "condemning the condemners," in which students deflect blame off themselves and onto their teacher, perhaps by characterizing the teacher as negligent or incompetent.

In 2008, the Josephson Institute of Ethics in Los Angeles reported that nearly two in three U.S. high school students have admitted to cheating on an exam in the past year.

The University of Missouri study, "Accounting for Cheating: An Evolving Theory and Emergent Themes," was published in January in the journal *Research in Higher Education*, and sent to the media this week.

"If instructors have poorly conceived classes and requirements, students will have plenty of rationalizations for cheating," the study's lead author, University of Missouri sociology Professor Edward Brent, said in a statement. "Well-designed classes, with clear expectations about tests and identified materials, would fulfill reasonable student expectations, decrease cheating and increase learning."

Justifications for cheating

Of the 169 students who reported that cheating was justified in certain circumstances or offered justifications for it despite insisting it was never justified, the following are the students' rationales, broken down by category:

41 percent: Denial of responsibility (accidentally plagiarizing, too much to do/too little time, beyond scope of course)

35 percent: Denial of injury (no great harm despite being explicitly prohibited)

24 percent: Condemning the condemners (deflecting blame onto the teacher for being incompetent, etc.)

21 percent: Self-fulfillment (better understand a concept for future applications, or for thrills)

5 percent: Appeal to higher loyalties (helping out a close friend in need, or life or death situation)

3 percent: Denial of the victim (no one hurt)

(Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because students were allowed to cite multiple rationales.)

1 in 3 students say cheating can be justified

By SCOTT MARTINDALE

2011-04-06 18:05:49

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Stepchildren judge stepparents on benefits

Published: April 7, 2011 at 11:32 PM

COLUMBIA, Mo.. April 7 (UPI) -- Stepchildren relate with stepparents based on the stepparents' treatment of them and their evaluation of the stepparents' behavior, U.S. researchers suggest.

Larry Ganong and Marilyn Coleman of the University of Missouri identified factors that are related to positive and negative stepchild-stepparent relationships.

The study, published in the Journal of Marriage and Family, found stepchildren's relationships with stepparents was based on the children's judgments on what the stepparents bring to the table, but they were also affected by biological parents and other family members.

"Whether or not stepparents are accepted by stepchildren depends on the overall family situation and if they are recognized as being beneficial to their family, either financially or emotionally," Ganong says in a statement. "However, step-relationships aren't determined solely by individual actions, but by the collective interactions of both persons in the relationship."

However, in some relationships, triangulation occurs when non-residential birth parents work to get their children to "side" with them and reject stepparents, the researchers suggest.

"Rather than engage children against stepparents, parents should seek counsel from persons outside the family, such as a minister, a therapist or best friend, and avoid getting kids involved," Ganong suggests.

"Parents should remember that they won't be replaced by stepparents if they maintain strong bonds and that their kids will still love them, even if they also love their stepparents."

MISSOURIAN

One Mizzou launches in response to hate crime

By Catherine Newhouse

April 7, 2011 | 6:32 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The night before the One Mizzou diversity initiative launched, 2,000 One Mizzou T-shirts arrived at the Center of Student Involvement with only three students to roll and tie them with rubber bands.

One Mizzou task force member Chris Rucker said he and the other two students panicked and then started texting and calling friends and leaders of different student organizations. An MSA Senate meeting got out next door, and even more students joined. Others walking by saw what One Mizzou was doing and started helping.

"We had like 50 people in a few minutes," said Rucker, who is vice president of the Residence Halls Association. "It was just a great sight to see everybody coming out for this one cause, especially at the last minute."

The One Mizzou diversity initiative launched Thursday afternoon in response to the hateful message written on a sculpture outside Hatch Hall in February and the cotton balls dumped in front of the Black Culture Center the year before. Although the initiative is still in its beginning stages, One Mizzou has already developed a task force of student organization leaders who are working to promote diversity on campus. The group will organize future diversity-related efforts.

Student leaders and MU Chancellor Brady Deaton, all wearing One Mizzou T-shirts, spoke to a crowd of listeners so thick at the Student Center that people passing through had to push their way through the audience to get out.

"Today has been overwhelmingly amazing with how many people who have been asking how they can get involved," Rucker said.

Deaton described the launch of One Mizzou as a "historic, watershed moment at the University of Missouri."

"This truly is the proudest moment I've had as chancellor, to stand before you and salute the wonderful work you've done on this campus," Deaton said.

Missouri Students Association President Eric Woods spoke about his vision for One Mizzou.

"We will make it abundantly clear that regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and any other factors, that the only colors that matter at Mizzou are black and gold," Woods said.

People crowded into the student center and lined up to get One Mizzou T-shirts and sign a pledge banner. Signatures filled up three banners, which will be hung from the bridge in the Student Center. Rucker said One Mizzou hopes to continue the pledge banners at the beginning of next academic year so students can pledge their commitment to diversity as they begin their college education.

Rucker said signing the banner is a pledge to not judge people or treat them differently.

"You're going to appreciate them as they are," Rucker said. "You show them that we are One Mizzou, we're going to come together, and when we come together, we're going to be powerful."

Students will have a chance to sign pledge banners again Friday afternoon and part of next week in the Student Center. More banners will be at the front desks of all the residence halls next week as well.

Leaders of student organizations can get involved in One Mizzou by joining the task force. In the future, One Mizzou will create multiple committees for students to join depending on their interests, Rucker said.

But in addition to its concrete goals, One Mizzou has also helped start friendships among people who otherwise would not have gotten to know each other. Rucker said he became best friends with the president of the Graduate Professional Council through One Mizzou, and he hopes others will form those kinds of friendships through the initiative. Rucker spends time with other task force members outside meetings, eating dinner together at The Shack.

"Just from weeks of meeting, I've become best friends with people from across campus organizations that I never would have been able to mingle with before," Rucker said. "We really are a One Mizzou family."

In February, One Mizzou brainstormed several ideas to promote diversity on campus, such as signing pledge banners, which are listed on the MSA website. Other ideas include:

- Starting an online diversity training course
- Incorporating diversity into Summer Welcome activities
- Sponsoring a diversity video contest
- Placing signs for drivers to honk for One Mizzou on campus boundaries
- Create a specific spot on campus related to diversity

"I like the fact that they're trying to initiate diversity just because campus seems so separate sometimes," MU sophomore Anitra Washington said after Thursday's event. "With more minorities coming in, it's important to have all those different racial groups come together with the same goal of getting a higher education."

theman eater

‘One Mizzou’ diversity campaign unveiled

Students signed a pledge to promote respect and responsibility at MU.

By Jimmy Hibs

Published April 8, 2011



Missouri Students Association Vice President Emily Moon, Residence Halls Association Lauren Thomas, Legion of Black Collegians President Lisa White, Chancellor Brady Deaton and MSA President Eric Woods sign a pledge to uphold respect and responsibility on campus at the launch event for the One Mizzou diversity campaign Thursday at the MU Student Center. Deaton called the event his "proudest moment" as chancellor.

Chancellor Brady Deaton stood with a smile on his face as he unveiled the “One Mizzou” campaign in the MU Student Center on Thursday.

“Let me just say that for me, as chancellor of the university, this truly is the proudest moment that I have had,” Deaton said.

Plans for the campaign have been in motion since February, when a student was charged with painting a racially-charged graffiti message on a statue outside Hatch Hall. Since this incident, numerous student groups have been meeting weekly to plan this campaign.

“Each of our student governments and the student organizations here at Mizzou are working with our constituents to make this possible on campus,” Residence Halls Association President Lauren Thomas said.

Graduate Professional Council Vice President Graham McCaulley said the last time such a large audience gathered at the Student Center was its official opening in October. He said this marked a “new beginning” for MU.

“Today also marks a new beginning, but not one that is confined within the walls of a building,” McCaulley said. “Rather, this is one that resides in our hearts and minds. This new beginning is our resolve and our pledge to embrace, to celebrate and to uphold the many students and communities as One Mizzou and to create a culture of respect and responsibility.”

Ways MU can go about fostering this culture include the creation of a diversity course requirement and integrating diversity into Summer Welcome, Legion of Black Collegians President Lisa White said.

“In addition to these efforts, we ask that you take it upon yourself to promote diversity and end discrimination,” White said. “It is about students educating students, sometimes even faculty and staff: sharing those experiences we have, the cultures in which we were raised in and those critical moments that have helped shape us. In a way, these conversations bring a better understanding to all.”

Missouri Students Association President Eric Woods said the support of the program was essential.

“We’ve all been inspired by the positive reaction and enthusiasm that One Mizzou has been met with not only by our fellow students, but by administrators, faculty and staff as well,” Woods said. “Without this broad support, we could never have brought this initiative to where it is today. With that continued support, we will see that it continues well into the future.”

This sustained support of the program is what will ultimately make it succeed, Deaton said.

“We may not be at the mountaintop yet, but I think we have truly arrived at least at the base of a mountain,” Deaton said. “We look up with confidence that we can get there and then move to the other side. Truly, we can build the kind of learning community that the University of Missouri has aspired to be.”

Deaton signed a pledge to promote a culture of respect and responsibility at MU, and encouraged other students to do the same.

“We will work tirelessly together to create a culture of respect and responsibility on this campus and make it abundantly clear that despite race or religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other factor, the only colors that matter to us at Mizzou are black and gold,” Woods said.

MISSOURIAN

MU Faculty Council votes to support grievance policy pilot

By Andrea Braxton

April 7, 2011 | 6:35 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – The MU Faculty Council voted to show its support for a pilot grievance process, which will be presented to the general faculty April 19. The council's vote was 21-4.

Bill Wicbold, professor of agronomy, was the most vocal supporter for the pilot. He referred to the process under past grievance policies as an ugly time.

“It was like taking a walk through the sewer of the university,” he said.

He admitted the new policy isn't perfect, but he said perfection in a policy like this is impossible.

“When I saw the pilot, I thought, ‘My God, why didn't we do this sooner?’” he said.

Among those opposed were Victoria Johnson, associate professor of sociology, who objected to having an administrator on the grievance resolution panel. Another dissenter, Gordon Christensen, professor of medicine, said he didn't think the policy would make the process of addressing grievances any smoother.

The former process began with the chancellor reading a grievance, then sending it to a standing faculty grievance committee to decide if it should be pursued. Once evidence was gathered by an investigator, the information was sent to a faculty hearing panel to make a recommendation to the chancellor for a final decision.

The new procedure still gives the chancellor authority to rule on a grievance, but now the grievance goes immediately to a resolution panel with two senior-tenured faculty members and one upper-level administrator for review.

Chairwoman Leona Rubin, associate professor of biomedical sciences, said the general faculty will vote on the policy near the end of April.

Missourian reporter Michael Davis contributed to this article.

THE MANEATER

Faculty Council discusses gen ed requirements

The council discussed prerequisite courses and created a committee to deal with family issues.

By Stephanie Ebbs

Published April 8, 2011

Faculty members weighed the option of letting students take upper level courses without taking prerequisites as part of Faculty Council's general education review Thursday.

The review suggests allowing students to take upper level courses without having to take the prerequisites. Students currently cannot receive that credit until the prerequisite courses are completed.

"I feel very strongly against this," said Nicole Monnier, director in Undergraduate Studies in Russian, regarding the possible change. "It's like saying 'Well, it fits in the schedule to take chemistry 3000 this semester, and I'll take chemistry 101 in the spring.' It makes no sense."

Many members of Faculty Council agreed that removing this requirement would deviate from the predetermined curriculum. They said the problem was with the registration process.

Engineering professor Harry Tyrer said some students make it to their senior year avoiding prerequisite courses and receiving substandard grades. By systematically avoiding prerequisite courses, Tyrer said those students were at a severe disadvantage.

Faculty Council will be communicating with the registrar's office and the general education review will be opened for discussion at the next Faculty Council meeting.

Also at the meeting, Faculty Council voted to create a standing committee on issues relating to the family obligations of students, faculty and staff. Endorsed by the Diversity Enhancement Committee, this committee will extend discussion on the issues addressed by the Family Friendly Initiative Task Force created by Chancellor Brady Deaton.

According to a letter from the Diversity Enhancement Committee, the new committee will continue to address the family-related needs as they are identified. The term "family" is to be inclusive rather than exclusive and includes families of all types.

For the upcoming general faculty meeting, Faculty Council voted to endorse the grievance pilot to become permanent. The pilot program has been in place since 2008, and the topic has been debated among faculty who are concerned for their rights to file complaints against university administration.

The grievance process suggests that allegations should be discussed as much as possible through informal discussions before formal grievances are filed.

Cynthia Cotner, a representative from the Chancellor's Persons with Disabilities Committee, spoke to Faculty Council about their work in trying to make MU a more welcoming place to people with disabilities.

The survey, done by the committee in 2009, highlighted the lapse in MU policies regarding its faculty, staff and students with disabilities. Cotner said 2 percent of MU students are registered with the Office of Disability Services. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 20 percent of Americans have some type of disability.

The survey reported that 28 percent of faculty and staff rated campus accessibility as poor, and 20 percent reported experiencing harassment because of their disability.

"What we've been talking about that in the committee is how we can improve that," Cotner said in regards to the statistics. "How we can become more welcoming to people with disabilities."

THE MANEATER

Report encourages more collaboration between Midwest universities

The Midwest has the strongest concentration of flagship universities of any major region.

By Joyu Wang

Published April 8, 2011

Facing statewide budget cuts, MU and universities across the region might consider reducing dependency on state funding, a report released last week suggested.

The report, "A Master Plan for Higher Education in the Midwest: A Roadmap to the Future of the Nation's Heartland," by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, calls for more cooperation among colleges and universities in the Midwest region in order to capitalize on the region's strengths and remain globally competitive.

The author, James Duderstadt, professor of science and engineering at the University of Michigan, said the Midwest has the strongest concentration of flagship research universities in the world, but the region's higher education might be at the greatest risk.

"The Midwest region must make the commitment and the investments necessary to become the brains of the twenty-first-century knowledge economy," Duderstadt said.

In the report, he stressed the importance of focusing on unique missions. For MU, that is advanced education and research.

"(MU) is a comprehensive university, with broad strengths, anchored in a state with large cities," Duderstadt said in an email. "It is more similar to large (Big 10) universities."

He said the report strongly encourages the state to support universities to stay at world-class quality, but it also warns the state is unable to provide the autonomy to control tuition, fees and enrollments.

Therefore, the report suggests colleges and universities to develop institutional collaboration instead of regional competition. According to the news release, the recommendations are such as streamlining curricula from K-12 through post-secondary education, exploring alternative higher education funding mechanisms, redefining the role of community colleges and promoting a culture of lifelong learning.

“The old geopolitical boundaries, such as state or local governance, are no longer relevant in a global economy driven by knowledge and innovation,” Duderstadt said. “Instead, what really matters are larger regions characterized by common economic, cultural and demographic characteristics.”

Chicago Council President Marshall Bouton stressed the importance of higher education, given the challenges faced by the region.

“Of the many issues facing the United States and the Midwest in the global era, developing the region’s human capital is one of the most urgent,” Bouton said. “Dr. Duderstadt’s work to re-conceptualize the role of higher education is critical to the Midwest’s future success.”

Duderstadt categorized Missouri into a region including Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota and Iowa. These states all possess large metropolitan concentrations with economies dependent upon high-tech manufacturing, agriculture and services, such as St. Louis and Kansas City.

Traditionally, Missouri has been more dependent upon low-skill and low knowledge economic activities than the high-tech and knowledge-driven jobs.

“Perhaps the most serious is the low priority given education in the state of Missouri,” Duderstadt said. “Fortunately, both St. Louis and Kansas City seem to understand these imperatives, but Jefferson City still seems relatively clueless.”

MISSOURIAN

Data: MU men cited more than women for alcohol violations

By Michelle Markelz

April 7, 2011 | 8:04 p.m. CDT

Experts say men are more vulnerable to arrest when intoxicated

COLUMBIA — This is one battle of the sexes that neither men nor women want to win. It's the battle over which sex is being cited more often for drug and alcohol violations at MU. And the winners are men.

MU's Department of Residential Life and the MU Police Department document alcohol and drug violations committed by MU students. From 2007 to 2009, men were caught breaking drug and alcohol rules in residence halls about twice as often as women. They were arrested just more than 3 1/2 times as often as women.

These counts were drawn from Clery Reports, which document annual campus crime, and from records provided by MU Police and by Kristen Temple, associate director of Residential Academic Programs. They include all B8 violations from 2007 to 2009.

The MU conduct handbook defines B8 violations as the "manufacture, use, possession, sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages or any controlled substance without proper prescription or required license or as expressly permitted by law or University regulations, including operating a vehicle on University property, or on streets or roadways adjacent to and abutting a campus, under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance as prohibited by law of the state of Missouri."

B8 violations can include being a minor in possession of alcohol. A 21-year-old, however, can receive a referral for bringing beer or liquor on campus, despite legally possessing it. The latter would not be documented in the Clery Report, which only includes criminal offenses.

From 2007 to 2009, MU Police logged 1,189 student arrests for drugs and alcohol. Residential Life reported more than 1,900 referrals. About 5 percent of the referrals from Residential Life were handled by the Office of Student Conduct, which deals with students who do not live in university housing.

An additional 669 referrals not counted in the Clery Reports are attributed to MU Police in Temple's records. Temple said the difference involves situations in which students documented on police reports, but not arrested, received referrals from the Office of Student Conduct for violating MU conduct codes.

Across MU's 23 coed residential buildings, men racked up more overall violations than women from 2007 to 2009. Sixteen buildings recorded double the number of violations by men than by women. Jones, Lathrop and Johnston halls, the three buildings that house only female students, were the only ones to report more violations by women than by men.

Temple estimated that 10 percent to 15 percent of those violations would not be reported as drug or alcohol offenses in the Clery Report. This is because not all conduct violations are illegal, though acts associated with them, such as vandalism, can be. These are counted as other offenses in the report.

In arrests or referrals recorded at street locations, men were cited about 2.6 times more often than women, according to Temple's records.

"If the question is, 'Do men drink more than women?' then the answer is yes," said Kim Dude, assistant director of MU's Wellness Resource Center. "It's true not just on our campus but nationwide." Dude said the same principle applies for drug use.

Reports point to national trend

National crime reporting supports Dude's assertions and suggests the ratio of men to women represented in campus crime is in line with national trends.

Municipal crime reports from 2007 to 2009 voluntarily submitted to the FBI show that men were arrested for drug and alcohol violations about 3.8 times more often than women in 40 cities similar in size to Columbia. Among those same cities, the average ratio of male to female arrests for drugs and alcohol is about 4 to 1.

Columbia did not submit reports for 2007, but in 2008 and 2009, men were arrested for drugs and alcohol about three times as often as women, and the average male-to-female ratio for these crimes over these years was 3 to 1.

Those numbers, however, run counter to survey data that suggest a smaller disparity in the numbers of college-age men and women who drink and use illicit drugs.

Reports from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration show that on average, about 8.4 percent fewer women than men surveyed in 2007, 2008 and 2009 admitted using drugs. The Missouri College Health Behavior Study conducted similar studies in the same year and found much smaller differences, except in the use of marijuana. An average of about 21 percent of men and 10 percent of women reported using marijuana.

Similar reports by the MU Wellness Center and the Centers for Disease Control from 2007 to 2009 show the average difference in drinking rates between college-age men and women was 3.1 and 8.3 percent, respectively.

Difference could be related to gender behavior, roles

MU Police have declined to comment on the gender disparity in both their reports and in Clery numbers.

MU Police Capt. Scott Richardson said arrests always start with an officer establishing probable cause to stop or search a person.

Capt. Brian Weimer said he wouldn't speculate whether men more often engage in behavior that would warrant a stop or search, but he recalled reading literature suggesting men are more prone to come in contact with officers while driving.

Dude and Temple speculated that men might attract police attention more often because they tend to be louder and sometimes physically rougher than women when they drink. Dude, however, said she could not speculate about behavior under the influence of drugs because different drugs can alter behavior in different ways.

"Police will tell you they look for behavior that draws a lot of attention to itself, like yelling, stumbling around," Dude said. Other conduct that tends to make men more vulnerable to arrest includes fighting, vandalizing property or urinating in public.

"We, as women, are socialized to follow the rules for the most part," Temple said. "Even when we don't follow the rules, we're socialized to be sneaky about it."

Researchers at MU, Arizona State University and the University of Kentucky have explored these behavioral trends.

MU psychology professor David Geary said his findings support the idea that men are more vulnerable to arrests or bad conduct while drinking.

"People have known about the gap for a long time," Geary said. "I've argued ... that it has a biological contribution to it, testosterone in particular, but also increased tendencies to take risks has to do with establishing yourself in the group."

Risks, as Geary refers to them, include drinking heavily, driving while intoxicated, fighting or showing off.

Geary, who in 2009 wrote the book "Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences," explained the difference mainly in terms of evolutionary traits specific to men and women. Drinking rates might be similar, he said, but men and women behave differently when drunk.

The difference in drug usage between genders could be related to the way men and women assess costs and benefits, Geary said. Men tend to consider the benefits, such as the positive way a drug might make them feel, while women tend to consider the costs, such as health effects or being arrested.

Julie and Craig Nagoshi of Arizona State University, who both study substance use among men and women, said the difference in arrests has a lot to do with gender roles.

“It is considered much more acceptable for boys ... to use illicit drugs without social consequences,” said Julie Nagoshi, who has studied gender differences in adolescent drug use. “Using drugs for women is incompatible with their gender role.”

She said men and boys generally are more likely to engage in bad behavior, and drugs are an extension of that.

Craig Nagoshi, who teaches a course about addiction, said when women use substances, they tend to be at home self-medicating and are less likely to do things that would get them noticed by police.

“In general, men use substances for externalizing reasons such as sensation-seeking or for thrills,” he said.

“Using drugs is like bungee jumping off the side of a cliff,” Julie Nagoshi said. “Alcohol and drugs are all part of those thrill-seeking behaviors.”

She echoed Geary, saying testosterone plays a physiological role in male risk-taking as well.

Alcohol connected to aggression, appropriate behavior

Drinking appeared to be a significant factor in two highly-published episodes of race-related vandalism at MU over the past two years.

Sean Fitzgerald, one of the students charged in the 2010 cotton ball incident, had been drinking, his attorney said in a previous Missouriian article. Benjamin Elliott, the student charged with second-degree property damage in connection with racist grafitti sprayed at Hatch Hall, told police he was drunk when he acted. Although contempt for the alcohol "excuse" was evident in community discussion of those incidents, research suggests a significant correlation between alcohol and illegal activity.

Peter Giancola, a professor of clinical psychology at the University of Kentucky, has conducted multiple studies on alcohol's effects on aggression.

“Research shows that women are going to be less severe in the type of aggression they show,” Giancola said. “It might be a slap in the face, a soft punch in the arm, a shove. At worst it might

be throwing something light at somebody. Whereas with a man, it might be a very hard punch in the face that might draw blood or knock out a tooth.”

People who are drinking are more easily provoked to violence, and alcohol exaggerates the response, especially in men, Giancola said.

“If you’re sober and I’m provoking you, you can hold it together pretty well. If you’re drunk and I’m provoking you at the same level, you’re pretty likely to react violently,” he said.

Giancola said alcohol limits a person’s perspective in confrontational situations. The principle is called alcohol myopia, which suggests that alcohol causes a person to focus on behavior that is most “attention-grabbing.”

“If someone under the influence of alcohol is being provoked, he or she can’t pay attention to the bouncer at the door or remember that they’re on parole,” he said.

Geary agreed, saying such tunnel vision can amplify responses, especially among those already prone to violence. “(People who drink) are less inhibited, so whatever tendencies there are when (they’re) not drinking will show themselves more intensely.”

“We can extend all of this to everything else,” Giancola said of the findings. “That includes increased likelihood of risky sex, drunk driving and all of what we call disinhibited behaviors.”

Giancola said the strongest factor in alcohol-induced aggression, however, is personality. If a person is naturally empathetic or aggressive, those traits will be more influential than almost any level of provocation.

The Nagoshis agreed, saying personality is also one of the most important determinants of illicit drug use and the illegal acts one might commit while under the influence.

“The drug does have an effect on behavior; you can’t deny that,” Craig Nagoshi said. “Some drugs are more powerful than others at disinhibiting. Personality is another factor, and they all interact.”

Other research focuses on the ways men and women metabolize alcohol. Martin Mumenthaler of Stanford University, who has studied the interaction of drugs with the body, wrote in a 1999 report about the effects of alcohol that women eliminate alcohol faster than men.

“You could hypothesize that men are more likely to be arrested in a drunken state,” he said. “And because women are not drunk for as long, you could hypothesize that they are less likely to be arrested.”

Messages influence behavior even while intoxicated

Some research shows that alcohol actually can make people behave more appropriately in some situations. Giancola conducted a study this year in which drunk and sober participants were

placed in rooms with different imagery meant to convey a message. Some were shown pictures of baby animals or sobering photographs of human suffering, images that were considered aggression-inhibiting, while others were shown photographs designed to promote violence.

"We found that (drunk) people in the room with the aggression-inhibiting imagery were so nonaggressive, they were even less aggressive than sober people."

A similar study done in 2000 by Tara MacDonald, an associate professor of psychology at Queen's University in Canada, examined how messages might influence whether a person engages in risky sex. Male and female participants' hands were stamped with one of three messages: a smiley face, the words "safe sex" or "AIDS kills."

Each participant was asked whether he or she went home and "hooked up" with someone. Those who were intoxicated and had "AIDS kills" stamped on their hand were least likely to have done so. Giancola said alcohol myopia caused those people to focus on the AIDS message.

In the cases cited by MU Police and Residential Life, it might not be that students are receiving messages that encourage bad behavior, but the lack of strong cautionary messages reduces the chance that alcohol will improve behavior.

In a spectrum of illegal behavior, Giancola said, sober people are always in the middle. The people most likely to break the law are the ones with nothing telling them to stop.

"The most prudent people are the ones who are drunk but bombarded with messages telling them that there will be consequences for those illegal behaviors," he said.