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MU students' food scraps to become garden compost

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The tons of food scraps and other trash thrown away at University of Missouri dining halls will soon help grow the vegetables the students eat.

Bradford Research Center has unveiled a 2,400-square-foot device called an aerated static pile. It will turn leftovers, napkins and other trash into compost. The compost will help grown vegetables at the research center, which will be used at dining halls.

Bradford Superintendent Tim Reinbott says Rollins Dining Hall and Plaza 900 began the project earlier this mont. Reinbott expects all nine dining halls to participate next semester.

The Columbia Tribune reports microorganisms break down the food scraps along with horse bedding. One of the device's five stalls will hold a week's worth of waste and should break down in four to five weeks.

MU dining hall scraps to nourish farm's crops

By Janese Silvey

Monday, November 28, 2011

Tons of food scraps typically tossed away at student dining halls will now head to a University of Missouri farm instead of the landfill.

Bradford Research Center recently unveiled a five-stall, 2,400-square-foot facility called an aerated static pile that will be used to turn leftovers, napkins and other trash into compost that can be used for crop gardens there. And those gardens supply veggies to campus dining halls, creating what Bradford Superintendent Tim Reinbott calls a "closed-loop system."

The process started earlier this month with two campus eateries, Rollins Dining Hall and Plaza 900. Reinbott expects all nine dining halls to participate next semester.

The aerating process relies on microorganisms to break down a mix of the food and paper scraps along with horse bedding. One stall will hold a week's worth of waste and should break down in four to five weeks, Reinbott said.

The composting facility was funded with a \$35,000 grant from Mid-Missouri Solid Waste Management District, and Campus Dining Services also pitched in \$35,000.

Lincoln University in Jefferson City has a similar process, and Mid-Missouri Solid Waste is encouraging other entities to consider composting models, said Deanna Trass, district coordinator.

Gardeners have been composting scraps for years, but other entities and individuals are starting to realize apple cores, egg shells, banana peels and uneaten food can be thrown outdoors instead of in trash cans.

"The main focus is to prevent a whole lot of stuff from going into the landfill," Trass said.

Reinbott suspects the new process will create more compost than the farm will need and expects MU Campus Facilities to use some for the campus's botanical garden. The rest, he said, can be bagged and sold locally.

Bradford Research Center also is in the process of implementing a process that would turn wasted vegetable oil into biodiesel fuel that would power the farm's trucks and tractors.

“The goal eventually is to have MU have a zero waste stream, that we’re doing something with all of it,” Reinbott said.

He stressed that he wants students to get involved in the composting processes.

“The educational component is tremendous,” he said. “We really want students involved in growing vegetables and doing experiments.”

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MU researchers say latest 'Twilight' film raises controversial issues

By Janese Silvey

Parents whose daughters are rushing out to see “Breaking Dawn” for the second or third time might want to talk to them about what they’re seeing.

Of all the “Twilight” movies to date, the latest installment sends the most controversial messages, said three University of Missouri researchers who have studied the book-turned-movie series and its legions of loyal fans.

“The important thing is to talk about this,” said Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz, an assistant communications professor. “Most of the messages we see about love and romance aren’t very realistic pictures of what it’s like to be in a healthy relationship, so talk about those things and about choices.”

Behm-Morawitz and colleagues Melissa Click and Jennifer Stevens Aubrey contributed to a scholarly book about the series, “Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media & the Vampire Franchise,” published last year. They found that girls think critically about the choices of the main character, Bella, who marries her vampire beau in the latest movie.

“Many of the teenage ‘Twilight’ fans we interviewed recognized the story lines in ‘Breaking Dawn’ as socially conservative,” Click said in a statement. “In fact, while they were excited to see Bella and Edward get married shortly after high school graduation, they did not want to make the same choices that Bella makes. ... These teenagers want to go to college, and they don’t want to rush into marriage and motherhood.”

But there are subtleties about power dynamics and gender roles being conveyed in the story that might not be as obvious, Behm-Morawitz said.

To marry, for instance, Bella has to give up everything, including her life. The couple has sex for the first time on their wedding night, which leaves Bella bruised and pregnant.

“There’s a danger that’s communicated about sex for teens and a willing acceptance of that danger,” Behm-Morawitz said.

And even though whatever inside her is killing her, Bella is determined to carry her offspring to full term.

Abortion is “never considered,” Behm-Morawitz said. “It’s not my place to say whether or not that is a good message or bad message, but it is a controversial message when it’s targeted to teens.”

Behm-Morawitz stressed that thinking critically about the messages doesn’t mean anyone is attacking the series.

“I’m a fan of ‘Twilight,’ ” she said. “I’m not a fan of all the messages communicated in ‘Twilight.’ It’s about taking note of what’s being communicated and thinking critically about it even while we enjoy it.”

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Growth in eLearning within UM System causes change, raises concerns

By Abby Eisenberg

November 28, 2011 | 3:03 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — In her ideal class, Sarah Zurhellen would have the students in her American literature course meet in person just once a week. Everything else would be done online.

This can't be a reality because of the current structure of MU, Zurhellen said. Still, the doctoral student comes as close as she can; her students often have time out of the classroom to research or write and, meanwhile, do the rest of their coursework and discussion online.

"I think that there is value always to having the conversation, but there's also value to having a week off from class to work on writing," said Zurhellen, who plans a career in college teaching. "I mean, that's a different form of articulating your ideas, and it's more complex than classroom discussion."

Her students are required to share their writing online through a class Wiki, a website that allows multiple users to contribute content. There, students can see and comment on each others' work. To safeguard student privacy, they use pseudonyms for all online work. To follow up, students often meet in small groups to discuss their writing.

Integrating digital technology into the learning process is increasingly common. More than 75 percent of MU courses are on Blackboard. Last year, the number of hours students watched recordings on Tegrity, a program some professors use to capture their lectures, doubled.

In the past five years, the number of MU students enrolling in distance online courses has almost doubled. The number of fully online offerings has gone from about 300 to more than 550 courses. Ten years ago, MU had 11 online degrees or certificates. Today, there are more than 50.

As online courses and degree offerings increase, the traditional roles of student and teacher are changing. They continue to change as administrators and faculty support the proliferation

of eLearning across the University of Missouri System. However, there is some concern among faculty that the integrity of academic institutions might be at stake.

Communication between student and teacher

MU doctoral student Peter Ramey sees a difference between how students and teachers interact online.

In his online British literature class, he required students to write a weekly reading journal using a blog. Here, they were to reflect on what they had learned and pose questions. Ramey then commented on the posts, answering students' questions and helping them understand the content better.

He said he appreciated this consistent, individualized give-and-take with the students that would be impossible in a traditional classroom.

Ramey said another advantage is that interacting online helps some students feel more comfortable participating in discussion than they would in person. Further, he said, there is a value in learning to communicate online — a skill important in many modern work environments.

Use of class time

In her American literature class, Zurhellen covers a range of writings stretching from the time of Columbus until now, so she said it is important for students to take time to think about and articulate their ideas.

She has taught one class entirely online but prefers a hybrid approach. She thinks the face-to-face time in her class is best used for discussion and analysis.

"I'm really trying to get students to see that so much of the stuff that they rely on a lecture to give is available free online," Zurhellen said. "What you should be getting out of this (classroom) experience is talking about the material and the ideas that come out of it."

Kellie Grasman of Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla teaches "Economic Analysis of Engineering Projects," a class that teaches students how to assess engineering projects from a financial perspective. About 600 students take the class each year, including students in a cooperative degree program in Springfield.

Grasman received funding from the UM System to develop an online version of the course to serve students at a distance. In creating material for them, she realized that her on-campus students could benefit from those resources.

Now, she offers the online elements as part of the on-campus version of the course. Throughout the semester, the students may choose to participate in the traditional classroom environment or learn independently or with groups of friends using the resources online.

Grasman expects that the students who come to class have gone over the material for the week and are there to ask questions and work collectively to reinforce what they've learned. She said that because the information is all online for students to revisit as they need to, she spends much less time repeating concepts.

Grasman estimated that on any given day, fewer than half of the registered students show up to the class.

"I'm not offended that they don't come to my class, because I know they can access any of the content on their own time," Grasman said. "If they are comfortable with learning independently, it gives me more time to focus on the students who need more input and personal instruction."

Use of technology to aid teaching

Teachers increasingly make use of online communication tools to enhance their teaching. Zurhellen uses Diigo, an online bookmarking tool that allows students to bookmark a link to a webpage and share it with the rest of the class. Students can also highlight and comment on those bookmarked pages.

Zurhellen makes herself available to students via Skype, to answer questions via the Internet outside of class hours.

At the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Lisa Dorner said that to create a successful online classroom environment, it is important not to rely just on writing for communication with her students.

"It is key to constantly research the new free tools that appear almost daily online," she said.

Dorner likes VoiceThread, an online interactive multimedia slideshow that allows students to respond to pieces of media and leave comments for each other using a recording of their voice, text or a video of themselves.

Convenience factor

For students and teachers alike, the convenience of online classes is a major pro.

The earliest distance learning came in the form of correspondence courses, in which course materials were mailed to people who couldn't take traditional on-campus courses. In recent years, though, distance learning has expanded, mostly due to the Internet. Students choose the online format for different reasons to best accommodate their particular constraints.

"One of the main drivers for us is to create opportunities for the students and for faculty," said Zachary March, director of eLearning for the UM System.

"For the students, it's to give them more options on being able to register for courses in an online format that may fit their schedule better," March said. "Maybe they work during the day or have family commitments, and maybe the course isn't offered on a local campus and they can take it from another campus, so they can get their degree on a quicker timeline. So for the students, it's all about the convenience factor."

Nicole Bierman, a registered veterinary technician in St. Louis, is enrolled in biomedical pathophysiology, an online class offered through MU's College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Working full time and being a parent and everything else I have in my life, it appealed to me because I could do it on my own time," Bierman said.

She said it can be hard to find the time she needs to do the work for her class, but she uses it to teach her 8-year-old daughter the importance of scholarship.

"We talked about the importance in studying," Bierman said. "I try to incorporate our studying together so she can see how important it is, not just for her but for me as well."

In the same class is Giulia Lino, a sophomore at MU majoring in animal sciences. Lino, who is enrolled in 16 credit hours and has a part-time job, found the flexible hours of the class worked well with her schedule.

"I figured it would be good, because it wouldn't be an extra class to go to, but I could still learn a lot," Lino said.

The time flexibility potentially extends to teachers. Faculty in the English Department offered Ramey the opportunity to teach his eight-week online course after he learned he and his wife were expecting a baby. Over the summer, he was able to travel, attend conferences and spend time with his new baby, all while teaching.

Concerns among faculty

Despite the opportunities that online learning can provide, there are drawbacks. Ramey suggests there is something missing in how the class communicates online.

"What it won't develop in students is real-time reaction and thinking collaboratively in the space of an hour," Ramey said. "And that translates into real experience if you have a job. In a meeting you have to be able to think and respond, so it's not able to develop those skills."

Russell Zguta, chairman of the MU Department of History, said one of his worries is a loss of faculty control over the curriculum.

Zguta's concern was heightened when he got two phone calls from people outside of MU saying they had Ph.D.s in history and offered to design courses for him. When he shared this information with the history department faculty, it led them to pass a resolution voicing their concerns, which they shared with administrators.

Concerns outlined in the resolution included the potential for online offerings to take away resources from the department itself. Faculty were also worried about maintaining the integrity of courses, particularly ensuring that testing was done fairly.

Ramey struggled with fair testing when teaching his online course. Despite his efforts to make his tests qualitative — requiring students to create their own answers rather than being able to copy things they could find on the Internet — he worried that cheating was still possible.

"I would write exams and quizzes that would purposefully avoid students being able to Google the answer really quickly," he said. "But I feel like students could still find the answers if they were savvy enough — and they are. They can probably find all of that information on the web."

Zurhellen said she never wants to teach only online. She wants to keep face-to-face teaching because it allows her to get to know her students.

"I don't like teaching fully online because I don't like never getting to see my students," Zurhellen said. "I had good students, but it's the first class I ever taught where I can't remember their names."

Ramey agrees, saying that being with people will always be important. "Whether it's through the mail or it's electronic, face-to-face relationships will always have to supplement that — because we're social creatures, and real social is real bodies and real people talking.

eLearning advances in the UM System

Next fall, MU will unveil a masters' degree in business administration that will be offered completely online. This offering is part of a trend on the campus toward increasing online options.

Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies, said demand has driven a lot of the growth. Faculty, especially within the College of Education and the Sinclair School of Nursing, observed a need to provide a way for professionals to advance their education while maintaining full-time jobs. This has pushed development of online offerings within the individual schools.

More broadly, Spain said he thinks the expansion of online-based options helps advance the goal of the university to serve as many students across the state as possible.

At the UM System level, March said his biggest project is a system-wide portal for online options. Students will be able to search online offerings in schools throughout the system rather than one campus at a time. This portal also will provide access to financial aid and billing information, as well as to Blackboard. March hoped to have the portal up and running this fall, but progress fell behind. He thinks it will be done by January.

In addition, the system provides funding for campuses to boost their online presence. Last year, the UM System distributed just less than \$500,000 across the four UM campuses to develop online courses, March said. Mostly, that facilitated the conversion of existing face-to-face classes to online.

The money is typically used for faculty release time, hiring graduate students to help build the courses, development of programming, providing opportunities for faculty to go to conferences about eLearning or buying software intended to help illustrate concepts in an online format.

This year, the system will provide \$300,000 to \$400,000 across campuses to be used for program development. This means that instead of the money going toward individual classes, it will go toward developing clusters of courses that will form certificate programs or full degree programs. March said he hopes to give out another round of funding in the next year or two to focus again on programs such as these, or maybe one that would cover collaborative online programs across the four campuses.

The UM System has set up additional support within each campus to allow instructors to explore online options. There are instructional designers on each campus to help faculty develop materials that are understandable for online students. Also available are what March called "e-mentors," which are groups of four to five faculty members on each campus who are available to help online development from a faculty perspective.

Committees formed to address concerns

In December 2010, a group called the MU E-learning Task Force was created to make recommendations for how to best oversee a combination of The Center for Distance and Independent Study and MU Direct: Continuing and Distance Education into one body, called Mizzou Online. Last spring, those recommendations were compiled by the task force and are being used to guide Mizzou Online as it continues to learn how to best operate as a cohesive department.

Academic concerns about teaching online will be addressed in a new faculty committee, called the Online Academic Program Task Force. Leona Rubin, associate professor of biomedical sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine and former chairwoman of MU's Faculty Council, co-chairs the task force with John David, associate professor of biological sciences in the MU College of Arts and Science.

"I think Jim Spain described this very well," Rubin said. "The first committee created the roads for how courses would be delivered, and now we have to create the regulations for the road."

This year, the committee has met weekly and has taken on a new topic surrounding online learning at each meeting. The main issues discussed have been:

- **Intellectual property.** When teachers create an online course with help and technology provided by MU, it is uncertain who owns that course. Rubin explained that

most faculty think online course material can be sold, and if that were to happen, it is unclear who would get the money.

- **Online course approval:** Rubin said the council basically agrees that the process for approving a face-to-face course on campus should be the same for online courses.
- **Money:** The task force will need to address the issue of incentives, or how departments and faculty will be paid for their online work, Rubin said. She said that in the past, MU Direct returned money earned from online courses to the individual departments that offered them. Sometimes, depending on the arrangement, money was awarded to the faculty who taught those courses. However, she said, departments and faculty don't get any extra money for teaching additional face-to-face courses. The task force will examine how this discrepancy should be addressed by MU administrators.

Rubin said she hopes the task force will be finished with its discussions by the end of the fall semester. After that, members of the task force will share their thoughts in a series of faculty forums, which will include members of the task force as well as representatives of the general faculty. Then the task force will reconvene and formulate recommended policies to go to faculty council for discussion and approval. Council recommendations will then go to the provost for final approval.

'Wave of the future'

Guided by the principles that will be set forth by this committee, Spain said he expects to see MU's online presence continue to grow based on the steady increases in the past. Despite his hesitations, Zguta said he sees the inevitability of this growth.

"This is obviously the wave of the future," he said. "Most universities are heavily involved. Even some of the finest offer courses online. So, I think we don't want to be left behind, but at the same time we want to do it in a responsible way."

Ramey agrees that changes such as these within MU should be made carefully.

"All media shifts make everybody nervous," Ramey said. "And they should make us nervous because they threaten older paradigms. How this changes our social interactions, how thinking changes — there's a lot to be concerned about."



Correction: Recording Lectures story

(AP) – 16 hours ago

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — In a story Nov. 17 about a new University of Missouri policy restricting how students can share recorded classroom lectures, The Associated Press reported erroneously that students must obtain written permission from their professors and classmates before making audio or video recordings in class. The new policy only requires written permission if students want to redistribute those recordings, including to other classmates.

Chicago Tribune

In caregiving, bond is often more important than blood

'Quality of relationship' trumps family ties, study says

By Leslie Mann, Special to the Tribune November 30, 2011

For years, Brad and Shelly Reipke, of Crystal Lake, enjoyed a friendship with their older neighbor, Bill.

"He was like a surrogate uncle," said Brad Reipke. "He taught me a lot about gardening. He shoveled our snow when I was out of town. We had him over for dinner. None of us has family nearby, so we became family."

When Bill got lung cancer two years ago, the Reipkes helped him stay in his home by bringing him food and doing his chores. When he was too weak to care for himself, the Reipkes took him in. Bill, who had two older brothers who were unable to help him, lived with the Reipkes until he moved to the Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Illinois in Woodstock, where he died in the summer.

"He wanted to stay in his house as long as possible," said Brad Reipke, who requested Bill's last name not be used. "So we did what we could to help. He would have done it for us."

Like the Reipkes, many caregivers are not related to the people they are looking after. But that doesn't have to be a drawback. What's important, according to a recent study, is the bond between the caregiver and the person in need of care.

In fact, "quality of relationship" is more important than "family ties," said Lawrence Ganong, a University of Missouri professor who asked 3,500 adults ages 18 to 89 nationwide about the topic.

The study participants were given scenarios with aging parents and caregivers who were children or stepchildren. (The study referred to "children" as "genetic," but, Ganong said, he included adoptees as children too.)

"For 25 percent of the participants, they said blood is thicker than water, and it is the children's responsibility to do the caregiving for older relatives," said Ganong. "But 75 percent said relationships mattered more than family."

The participants were asked about helping older folks with housing, finances and daily tasks.

Ganong said that stepchildren were just as likely as children to care for their parents "if they had a good relationship," he said. "They'd be more likely to care for the stepparent they've lived with for years than the biological parent they never see."

Factors that affect the caregiving decision, said Ganong, are hardships facing the caregivers, how close the two were before the older person got sick and mutual help in the past.

"More baby boomers are reaching the point where they need caregivers," said Ganong. "Divorce and remarriage, especially, mean families rethink who will care for their kin."

According to the San Francisco-based Family Caregiver Alliance, the number of unpaid caregivers is increasing. More than three-quarters of adults in need of care depend on family or friends as their only source of help. Fourteen percent also have paid help. Eight percent use paid help only. Most of the recipients live at home.

The average caregiver is age 48 and female, but the number of male caregivers is increasing, said the alliance. The caregiver usually lives within 20 minutes of the recipient.

Although the Reipkes' case was harmonious and they drafted legal documents including a health care power of attorney, informal caregiver arrangements can be problematic, warned Elmhurst attorney Ben Neiburger.

"The issue with a volunteer caregiver is 'no good deed goes unpunished,'" he said. "Caregivers should beware. If something is missing, the caregiver is blamed. If the older person gives the caregiver money or a gift, the family may accuse the caregiver of stealing."

Neiburger recommends putting caregiving agreements in writing, and including expectations and time sheets. "Otherwise, if there's a problem, and there's just an oral agreement, the caregiver is toast," he said.

The laws have not caught up with the changing definition of "family," said Leah Eskenazi, director of operations of the alliance.

"Laws in 30 states say 'family' is supposed to take care of its members, but the definition of 'family' varies," she said. "This is especially a problem in the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community."

The alliance recommends caregivers and their recipients consult elder-care attorneys to discuss wills, living trusts, power of attorney for finance, power of attorney for health care and "Do not resuscitate" documents. The alliance's website explains each.

Although fewer than half of all caregivers are nonfamily, people like the Reipkes understand the value of these relationships.

"Like Bill, we don't have kids," said Brad. "So I hope when the time comes, someone will do this for us. When you don't have family nearby, you create your own."

Mentors offer personal lessons on aging for aspiring physicians at MU

By Emilie Stigliani

November 29, 2011 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Ezio Moscatelli once portrayed a 90-something-year-old character in the play "Social Security."

"At that time," Moscatelli said, "me and the grandma were having a lot of fun because neither of us were anywhere near that age."

At 85 years old, Moscatelli no longer acts in Maplewood Barn Community Theater productions and sees aging differently. He has survived two episodes of esophageal cancer and a quadruple bypass heart surgery. He sits at his kitchen table with a blood pressure cuff around his upper arm and waits quietly for the numbers to appear.

The display reads 166. He settles into his seat. He said that it has gone as high as 230, "which would kill most people."

Despite health issues, Moscatelli is vibrant and remains an active participant in the education at MU's Medical School, where he served as a biochemistry lecturer for 35 years and a problem-based learning tutor for 13 years. He guided students in studying, diagnosing and recommending care for real-life clinical cases.

For the past four years, Moscatelli has taught more personal lessons as part of the Heyssel Senior Teacher Educator Partnership that began in 2001 to address the increasing demand for geriatricians to care for aging populations.

There are more than 75 million baby boomers approaching retirement age, a demographic that's driving the need for more geriatricians. In 1950, the average life expectancy was 68. Today, it's more than 78.

The partnership pairs first-year medical students with elderly people for lunches and other opportunities to discuss aging. It also includes activities such as movies and walks.

The partnerships aren't limited to aspiring physicians who want to specialize in caring for older patients, said Peggy Gray, coordinator of the program, because the relationships can benefit all medical specialties.

One measure of the program's success is its growing popularity. In the first year, 29 medical students and 35 older partners signed up. This year, there are 61 students and 77 partners. Some partners share a student.

All total, 965 people have participated.

Gray said geriatric training is necessary because older adults have unique medical needs.

The training is also intended to break down stereotypes that students have about caring for seniors, Gray said. Often, doctors see older patients in the hospital when they aren't at their best. The program offers students the opportunity to know seniors as more than just patients.

"I've seen our students change in the way they interact with older people because of participation in STEP," Gray said. "They become advocates for seniors and their well-being."

Michael Hosokawa, a professor at MU's Medical School and a founding member of the program, began volunteering this year. The basic concept of the partnership is to share stories, he said.

"We get to know each other through stories," Hosokawa said. "As we get to know people, we share more personal parts of ourselves."

Though Moscatelli retired in 1996, he is a legend at the medical school. He won numerous teaching awards, including the prestigious William Kemper Fellowship for Excellence. After his heart surgery, so many students crowded into his recovery room that the nurses had to chase them out.

Vinh Duong became the fourth medical student to partner with Moscatelli. When he met Moscatelli last September at a kickoff dinner, he tried to be formal.

"I addressed him as Dr. Moscatelli," Duong said.

Moscatelli was quick to put his young charge at ease.

“He shared a lot about his life,” Duong said. “He told me, ‘Get ready, there is a lot more to say.’”

Moscatelli said one of the best parts of the program for him is the opportunity to continue interaction with students after retirement.

Duong's own family life serves as a motivation for carving out time from his 50 hours per week of study to spend time with Moscatelli. “For most of my life, I didn’t grow up around grandparents, and so Ezio is like my grandpa. I told him that when we first met.”

Duong’s grandparents live in Vietnam where he was born and spent his early childhood.

Duong said spending time with Moscatelli makes him want to provide more holistic care to older patients. It’s not just about treating their medical needs, he said. “You have to include their emotional, spiritual and mental well-being.”