

Mizzou Weekly

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MU's dispute resolution center is still a national model after 25 years

ACADEMIC ADVOCATES

Looking for options to contentious litigation

With lower transaction costs and quicker turnaround, alternative dispute resolution — settling disputes outside of court — has become an integral part of law both in practice and education. As one of the first law programs to integrate alternative dispute resolution into the curriculum in the 1980s, the Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution (CSDR) at the MU's School of Law has shaped this growing field for the past 25 years and is a model for the future.

"We want our students to think differently about how they would serve as lawyers and advocates after they graduate. Prior to this, the prevailing philosophy was that law students came to law school to learn how to be tough litigators," says James Levin, the center's associate director.

"We wanted students to think more about what a lawyer does. What does it really mean to help and serve as an advocate for clients? In some cases, litigation might not be the best bet and we encourage students to look for other options. If we can understand what our clients need, we can find the best forums that meet those needs."

When the program was established at MU in 1984, it became one of the first programs of its kind. The field of dispute resolution was in early development stages. Professors at MU revolutionized the curriculum by integrating dispute resolution into all first-year courses. Today, alternative dispute resolution is integral in law and similar programs have become mainstream.

Last week, the Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution was given the "Problem Solving in Law School" award for 2009 by the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution. The award program recognizes achievements in alternative dispute resolution. The judges for the awards include judges and lawyers from top firms, corporations and academic institutions across the country. An individual award, Best Professional Article, also was presented to S.I Strong, associate professor of law and senior fellow at the center, for her article "The Sounds of Silence."

The center continues to forge new ground in the dispute resolution field. In 1999, the law school established the nation's first master of laws program in dispute resolution, through which "more than 123 students from 28 countries have graduated. MU remains one of the few schools that offer such a degree. The law school also houses the Journal of Dispute Resolution, a student edited, bi-annual academic

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NFL grant will focus on detecting career-ending knee injuries

ON-FIELD DIAGNOSIS

Technology could aid people and animals

For about a million active people in the United States every year, tearing the meniscus in their knee can mean the end of participation in the activities they enjoy. For NFL football players, it can mean the end of their careers if not diagnosed and treated efficiently and effectively.

Currently, diagnosing meniscal problems most often involves a combination of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and arthroscopy done days to weeks after injury — this process is time-consuming, expensive and invasive. Now, University of Missouri researchers are working on developing a technique for 'on-the-field' diagnosis of meniscal tears. National Football League Charities has awarded MU researchers a \$120,000 medical grant to fund this project.

James Cook, the William and Kathryn Allen Distinguished Professor in Orthopaedic Surgery, and his team in the Comparative Orthopaedic Laboratory have been improving diagnostic measures to identify joint issues quickly, correctly and non-invasively in hopes of curbing damage, speeding recovery and preventing future problems. They also are examining potential biomarkers for knee injuries that could help determine problems, guide treatments and predict healing.

"This meniscal diagnosis project funded by NFL Charities fits perfectly with these missions," Cook says. "The research that we are doing at MU is improving the way we diagnose and treat joint problems in elite athletes, as well as individuals of all levels of activity."

Meniscal tears are especially common in athletes — human, canine, and equine — who participate in contact and cutting sports. Many football players injure their menisci each year while performing twisting and pivoting maneuvers in games or practice.

"The problem is that the nature and extent of the injury is nearly impossible to determine until the MRI and arthroscopy procedures are performed, leaving the player, coach and medical personnel uncertain of whether the player can or should continue to play, what treatment will be required and what the prognosis is," Cook says. The MU research team on this project is hoping to change all of that by validating a method for on-the-field evaluation of the menisci using a ultrasonography technique they have developed and tested on dogs.

Cook says the research will benefit both humans and animals. "We are working hard to help cure the joint disorders common in people and animals," he says. "Our team is dedicated to putting great science behind optimal delivery of care for all patients, two-legged and four-legged."

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Soybean genome mapping could lead to improved varieties

A NEW TOOL

Achievement is highlighted in Nature magazine

While it probably won't get the attention that the human genome, cow genome or even the cat genome got, the identification of the more than 46,000 genes in the soybean genome could be a big deal in a world hungry for more and better food, a cleaner environment and better products.

As announced in the January issue of Nature magazine, a team of scientists including members of the National Center for Soybean Biotechnology at MU's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, announced that they have identified the location of approximately

1.1 billion base pairs in the soybean. In comparison, the human genome has approximately 3 billion base pairs.

Soybeans are one of the most important crop plants for their protein and oil, representing an almost \$30 billion industry in the United States. The plant is a significant foodstuff in most of the world and the leading U.S. animal feed. It also is used in the manufacture of plastics, hydraulic oil and cleaning products.

Improved versions of these legumes, based on precise genetic information, could create more food that can be grown in more areas, as well as expand the soybean's already impressive list of uses. Improved soybean oil used in deep frying could make French fries less of a risk for increasing cholesterol in people and positively impact the epidemic of obesity.

A better understanding of soybean characteristics couldn't have come at a better time as soybeans are entering a new area of bio-diesel as a cleaner-burning alternative to petroleum. Given the soybean's known ability to capture and sequester carbon in the atmosphere and turning it into protein and oil, the soybean may become an important method of achieving environmental balance.

Henry Nguyen, director of the center, says the genome sequence will be a new tool for plant breeders, industrial engineers, geneticists, biochemists and technologists, nutritionalists and others who use soybeans. The genome team has identified more than 90 distinct traits that affect plant development, productive characteristics, disease resistance, seed quality and nutritional traits.

"Perhaps the most exciting thing that we have found for the soybean community is the gene that confirms resistance to the devastating Asian soybean rust disease," Nguyen says. "In countries where this rust is well established, soybean losses can range from

10 percent to 80 percent. Improved soybean strains resistant to the disease will greatly benefit production and increase foodstuffs around the world."

With knowledge of what gene controls what soybean trait, scientists may be able to better adapt the plant to drought conditions, bringing a new cash crop and food product to poor areas of the Earth.

Gary Stacey, associate director of the MU center, initiated the project in 2007 through discussions with the Joint Genome Institute in California that is funded by the Department of Energy.

"The completion of this large, demanding project was only possible through the concerted efforts of the entire soybean community," Stacey says. "Important contributions were made through state and national soybean checkoff organizations, such as the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council and United Soybean Board, who funded some of the initial work. This

foundation and the involvement of scientists at other universities, such as Stanford, Purdue and Iowa State, convinced the Department of Energy to fund the project.”

The human genome project, largely completed in 2003, is helping scientists to understand how genes express themselves, leading to diseases and genetic mutations. Nguyen has already begun collaborating with animal science and nutrition experts to modify soybeans added to animal feeds that could increase the health value of meat. Specifically, he is looking at ways to impart isoflavones, known to decrease the frequency of cancer, and proteins from soybeans into the meat.

People have been using soybeans for a long time. The annual plant has been used in China for 5,000 years to add nitrogen into the soil as part of crop rotation. Soybean meal has been a primary, low-cost protein for animal feeds for centuries. Soy vegetable oil has been consumed by people for a similar period. More recently, soybean derivatives have become a key component in industrial applications, particularly in paint, plastics, inks, solvents, cleaners and hydraulic fluid.

In 2009, approximately 74.7 million acres of soybeans were harvested in the United States yielding \$29.6 billion in revenues for farmers. The economic impact of soybeans is second only to corn around the nation. Missouri is fifth in the country for soybean production, accounting for about \$2 billion in sales. U.S. soybean exports were estimated at 1.1 billion bushels in 2009.

A particular area of growth for the bean is in energy. Soy biodiesel is cleaner burning than petroleum-based diesel oil. Its use reduces particulate emissions, and it's non-toxic, renewable and environmentally friendly.

Production of U.S. biodiesel from soybeans is expected to increase from approximately 413 million gallons in 2009 to 648 million gallons in 2019, according to the 2009 World Agricultural Outlook by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI).

Though a staple in the diets of many Asian countries, soybeans are not common on American tables except as oil. Ninety-eight percent of the U.S soybean crop is used for livestock feed and some dog foods. The nutritional benefits of the product are being slowly recognized. Soy-based infant formula is used for children allergic to cow milk proteins. Soy is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and isoflavones, and is credited with the ability to reduce serum cholesterol in humans.

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CASH Program bolsters student payrolls

CASHING IN

Participation has been high in student work program

The current economic climate has made it difficult for students to find internships and part-time jobs. This past year, the University of Missouri Economic Downturn Work Team, the Division of Student Affairs and the MU Career Center partnered to find a solution, creating new on-campus student employment opportunities. Beginning in August 2009, the CASH (Campus Augmenting Student Hires) Program has been providing matching funds to campus employers for hiring students for new or unfilled work-study positions.

“We believed that we could utilize the many skills and abilities of students for jobs on campus more effectively,” says Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs. “This is a situation that is beneficial for everyone. Students are able to find work, and campus departments have additional help to get the work done.”

The CASH Program provides an incentive for hiring students. CASH matches up to \$500 per semester per student. The department is responsible for providing the rest of the student’s salary. Of the \$400,000 in the budget, \$245,000 has already been committed to student salaries. Participation has been high since the onset of the program. A total of 242 student positions in 62 campus departments have been posted and filled since the program began last fall. A wide range of positions have been filled, from graphic designers to research assistants.

“This program is a great tool for departments with limited financial and human resources,” says Amanda Nell, senior coordinator of student employment for the MU Career Center. “Students bring vitality, new perspectives and invaluable insight to the workplace.”

On-campus student employment provides benefits to both the student and the university. Students gain real world experience while applying the skills that they are trained for in the classroom. On-campus jobs provide students with a support system and a smaller community that can help with student retention. Students earn financial benefits that enable them to continue their educational experiences. Research has found that students who work between 10 and 20 hours a week on campus have higher grade point averages.

“Working with students reminds me why I’m here,” Scroggs says. “It’s a learning opportunity for us and a way to stay connected with student culture.”

Paul Toler, director of Business Services at MU, established the Economic Downturn Work Team to provide support to students and their families managing the financial pressures associated with attending college during the current economic climate.

As a result of the team’s recommendations, the CASH Program and an Economic Hardship Grant Fund were developed. The Economic Hardship Grant Fund, which is separate from the CASH program, offers awards to students whose financial circumstances have changed and whose financial difficulties are critical and immediate.

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With budget woes, Staff Council focuses on morale, career development

KNOWING THE LIMITS

Staff group explores sick leave pool

The Staff Advisory Council worked hard throughout 2009 to remind administration of the important role of staff in fulfilling the academic mission of the MU campus.

Today's economic woes led the group to refocus its goals. Marijo Dixon, council chair, says that while salaries and raises are of major concern to the council, it is important that staff members realize the campus cannot generate enough new money to give employees a 4 percent raise without increasing the risks of layoffs and furloughs. Until the economic situation stabilizes, the council will give greater attention to other areas like morale and professional and career development through the Staff Development Awards program.

"I believe those sort of things have been cut completely on other campuses," she says. "At MU, however, the chancellor has allowed us to continue awarding them because so many departments have been forced to cut those funds. This is a way for staff who need training to have a chance to get it, even with tight budgets. I think that was a good call."

A new goal added to the list for this year is a shared sick leave pool policy. Three council members drafted a proposal and presented it to representatives from both University of Missouri System Human Resources and MU Human Resources. In essence, the policy, if adopted by the UM System, would allow full-time employees to voluntarily donate vacation, personal or comp hours to a pool managed by human resources. The pool would be available for any employee to use for catastrophic personal illness or injury.

The council has talked with administration about such a pool for several years. "I am encouraged that they are actually talking about it now," Dixon says.

Throughout the year, the council met with UM System and campus administrators to ensure that the needs of staff members were not forgotten. In February, Chancellor Brady Deaton and Jackie Jones, vice chancellor for administrative services talked with council members. At that time, the major concern was the legislature and what it would do to MU's budget.

"We were all preparing for up to a 25 percent withholding," Dixon says. "We were lucky enough that nothing much was changed, but the year isn't over. Staff has to understand that is wise to be cautious when you are dealing with a budget that is never really firm. The council understands there are definite limitations. Our job has been to make sure the administration understands what staff need and that the staff understand what the limitations are."

Much discussion about employees contributing to the University's pension fund surrounded UM President Gary Forsee's visit with council in March. "We tried to stress how it would hurt staff who make below a certain income level," Dixon says. "We did our best, but couldn't get them to change the now in-place 1 percent and 2 percent employee withholdings. We are being reassured at this point that those percentages will not change in the upcoming year because the investments look like we should be OK."

Something else that won't change for this year is the annual Staff Recognition Week to be held May 17 through 21. The council is working on ways to celebrate and recognize staff at a nominal cost. An event held last year that got rave reviews will return this year. "We are excited to sponsor the Showcase of Talent, an arts and crafts display highlighting staff members' talents outside the office," Dixon says. "There is so much to all of us and it is nice to be able to showcase our other talents. We hope that faculty, staff and students will come by Ellis Library and take a look during this two-day event." Other popular events like the Walk with the Gardeners and power walks with the Wellness Center will return as well. "We are trying to do as much as we can to make the week special," Dixon says.

The highlight of the week will be the awards ceremony on May 17 and nominations are being accepted for the four Chancellor's Outstanding Staff Awards, the Mick Deaver and Barbara Uehling awards, and the Mizzou Alumni Association's Award of Excellence. Dixon encourages faculty and staff to nominate candidates for these recognitions.

Staff members interested in helping select this year's award recipients should let the council know, Dixon says.

"We always want to know what staff is thinking," she says. "A lot of good ideas come from staff at large. We encourage them to e-mail council members or call the council office." Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for council members are at <http://staffcouncil.missouri.edu>.

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In the bag



PURSE PURSUIT Jean Miller, an office support specialist in plant sciences, is making a name for herself as a designer and producer of one-of-a-kind handbags that reflect her clients' personalities. Photo by Randy Mertens.

FASHION STATEMENT

Staff member creates unique handbags

In the Parisian world of couture fashion, Adeline Andre can design a custom dress for you or Antonio Berardi can craft one-of-a-kind shoes. In mid-Missouri, Jean Miller is becoming well known for her unique handbags.

Miller, an office support specialist IV in plant sciences, has been making one-of-a-kind purses for friends and clients for more than five years. Each purse is not only a utilitarian device to tote things in, but a fashion statement that reflects the client's personality.

"Fashion and purses have always fascinated me," Miller says. "I could never find the style and look that I wanted so I began designing my own."

Miller's grandmother and mother were both seamstresses who handed their skills down to her. The design work began in earnest when Miller's husband bought her a new sewing machine.

"Initially, I modified other people's patterns," Miller says. "Some of those instructions were not very good or poorly described. So, I started designing my own."

Miller says her first creations were "average tote bags" that were easy to design and sew. As her confidence grew and her designs became more popular, she evolved into more complex purses with handmade buttons, zippers and flaps. Her design language also became bolder and brighter.

Larger bags are a little easier to make. With experience, her designs have become smaller with more details.

This is not Miller's first entrepreneurial effort. The Shebina, Mo., native had a short stint detailing cars. She came to MU in 1997 as a curriculum specialist at MU Independent Study. She began human resources work initially at the School of Natural

Resources, then the Division of Plant Sciences.

Most of Miller's bags are made to order and it takes four to eight hours to make each item. Like other artists, she consults with her clients to find out how they intend to use the bag and what fashion statement they want to make with it. Getting to know each client helps her to impart the client's personality into the bag.

"I have a client who orders a new bag for every season," Miller says. "I've made a pattern designed specifically for her. In fact, I named the design after her."

Miller tries to make each bag unique. "Women don't like to see their bag being carried by someone else," she says. Because each purse is made specifically for its wearer, Miller can sew in secret messages. A daughter giving a purse to her mom had "I love you" put into the purse. About one-third of Miller's bags are given as gifts. Some are donated to charitable organizations as fundraiser items and others at her sole retail outlet, Granny's Antiques in Rocheport, Mo.

"What is popular now are pleated bags," Miller says. "Very casual. My bags tend to be on the bright and bold side. I want something that is striking and different. I want people to notice them."

Almost all of her work is made from washable cotton. Finding the right material is often the most time-consuming part of each creation, she says. To get the right look, one bag was made from obsolete neckties. Another bag was made from fabric left over from the 1970s.

Miller has created several hundred bags so far. As her reputation has spread, so have orders for her work. She includes a designer label in each bag—a green bean graphic with the words Bean Bag.

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