

June 9, 2011 Volume 32, No. 31

Arts showcase draws attention to MU staff's off-the-clock talents



STAFF SHOWCASE Crowds browse MU staff artwork on the second floor of Ellis Library during the Staff Recognition Week Arts and Crafts Show on May 17. The show featured a variety of arts and crafts, such as textile wall hangings, welded steel sculptures, and hand-woven baskets. Rachel Coward photo

STAFF RECOGNITION WEEK

Photography, painting and crafts on display

It was an exposition of juxtapositions: a grant writer who fashions fiber into decorative rugs; a billing agent who builds furniture; a research-reactor employee who sketches in charcoal.

That's just a few of the dedicated MU staff members who showed their artistic side during MU's Arts and Crafts Showcase. The three-day event, held May 17-19 at Ellis Library, was part of Staff Recognition Week. Other activities during the week included power walks and a seminar on stress management.

But clearly, some staff members have found their own methods of de-stressing.

Rebecca Calvin's welded-steel sculptures of graceful torsos welcomed visitors to Room 201 with a stunning statement of movement in steel. Calvin works with the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative.

A show of Mizzou pride, a felted tiger-stripe rug covered a display table with black and gold alpaca fiber. Grant writer Mary Licklider created the eye-catching piece in partnership with Linda Coats of Career Planning and Placement and retired MU employee Diane Peckham. Visitors who hovered nearby wondered aloud if the group would take commissions.

Sitting in a row, Gregory A. Cook's chairs spoke to his talents as a furniture builder and restorer of pieces from yesteryear. Cook began acquiring woodworking skills as an 8-year-old in 4-H. Now the caning, upholstering, building and refinishing are an afterwork respite that takes him into his backyard woodland in search of material. As a benefit of the endeavor, "there are power tools involved," says Cook, who provides pediatric billing for Child Health-Administration.

Hanna Pippin, an administrative assistant at MU's Research Reactor, created delicate beauty with her hand-felted wool basket and flowers that radiate soft colors. The art classes Pippin took in beginning fibers enhanced her abilities in that genre, but she says her charcoal sketch of a tiger face is perhaps her favorite piece.

As CAFNR Web specialist Genevieve Howard shared her photography with the public, the subject of her central photo — 2-year-old Jazzmyn Pallikkathayil — skipped happily around the room. Howard's images of landscapes, flowers and the photogenic tot reflect her love of capturing beauty. Photography is "just a joy" for Howard.

Ann McGinity's hand-woven baskets of dyed reed, sea grass and willow called out to be touched, and some visitors found them too hard to resist. McGinity's day job is with Environmental Health and Safety.

In the odd and unusual category, Dennis Murphy, an illustrator with Extension Publications, exhibited a fascinating acrylic self-portrait representing himself with images of brushes, pencils, erasers and other tools of his trade. Tab Leach of Energy Management displayed custom-made traditional archery. Leach teaches build-it-yourself bow classes for aspiring archery artists.

The artful specialties of Rob Taylor, Budget Office, and Janet Bradshaw, Graduate School, combine light and glass. Taylor crafts stained glass windows and light catchers; Bradshaw makes one-of-a-kind jewelry of tiger-stripe and floral glass beads. Her work can be found through her business, Beauty in a Bead, with a website coming soon.

Textile arts showed fun and function in all forms, from crewel and counted cross stitch to embroidery and crochet. Heiddi Davis of Campus Facilities paints with thread and does quilting and appliqués to create charming wall hangings. Karen Worley of Publications and Alumni Communication gives discarded upholstery scraps a second life in the form of colorful tote bags. Katrina Monnig of Landscape Services uses TV viewing time to work on counted cross stitch. And Julie Patterson of Child Health Administration spreads warmth with a black, white and gold quilt bursting with Mizzou images.

Several pieces mentioned here are for sale, and many of the artists and artisans take commissions.

- Nancy Moen

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After failed vote, MU remains committed to diversity requirement

ONE MIZZOU

"Multiple factors" led to proposal's narrow defeat

Campus leaders say that despite the failure of a recent proposal to pass muster with MU faculty, they plan to keep working on a diversity-intensive course requirement for undergraduate students.

In May, the general faculty narrowly rejected a proposal drawn up by the MU Faculty Council that would have required completion of a three-hour course that explores "the diverse human experience" before graduation. Ballots were sent to 1,200 faculty members; 210 voted for the proposal, while 232 voted against it.

Council Chair Leona Rubin said "multiple factors" contributed to the proposal's defeat. Some faculty members were concerned about the process for approving courses that would be designated diversity-intensive. Others thought the focus on "social inequalities" was too narrow. Still others believed students were already knowledgeable about diversity issues and a course requirement was unnecessary.

"My biggest concern is that we did not hear these concerns before the vote, or we were not listening because we thought we had a good product," Rubin said.

Rubin said she expects the council to revisit the issue during the 2011-2012 school year.

Debate on a diversity course began in 2004. The issue took on added urgency following two racially charged incidents involving students. In February, an 18-year-old freshman was arrested in February for allegedly spray-painting a racial slur on a statue outside Hatch Hall. That incident, just one year after two students were arrested for scattering cotton balls in front of MU's Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center, sparked outrage and a broad discussion about the campus environment.

In March, after months of debate and discussion, faculty council approved a proposal to require students to take a three-hour course dedicated to the study of social inequalities related to ethnicity, race, class, gender and religion. Under that proposal, a subcommittee of the Committee on Undergraduate Education would develop criteria for courses credited as diversity-intensive courses.

Rubin said she would continue to gather input on the need for a diversity requirement, while addressing specific faculty concerns, especially the process for approving diversity-intensive courses.

In a statement, MU Chancellor Brady J. Deaton said he was disappointed that the proposal failed, but expressed confidence that faculty would ultimately come to agreement on a requirement.

"I remain certain our faculty are as committed as I to supporting diversity on our campus," he said.

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Task forces will examine administration, teaching of distance courses

E-LEARNING

Aligning course delivery with strategic plan

The University of Missouri offered its first correspondence course in 1911. A century later, modern information technology has transformed "distance learning," and courses that were once delivered via the U.S. mail are now offered via web-based educational tools that bring the classroom t the student.

The first online courses were offered at MU in the mid-1990s, with the first online degree program beginning in 1999. With that evolution came a need to reevaluate how students who take courses away from campus are taught and how they learn.

Now, several months after a strategic realignment of MU's distance learning programs, the campus has begun to evaluate how best to reorganize the university's distance education. Meanwhile, faculty leaders are planning to study educational policies and concerns related to distance learning.

In December, the Center for Distance and Independent Study (CDIS), MU Direct and an associated marketing unit were moved from MU Extension to the administrative umbrella on the MU campus. The move came in an effort to better align course delivery with MU's strategic direction and academic programs.

Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies, was named the interim vice provost for eLearning to give the units an administrative home during this transition.

A task force, appointed by the Provost Brian Foster and chaired by Tom Henderson, was asked to examine the transition of administrative functions of MU Direct and CDIS from MU Extension to the campus.

"It is important to note that the task force was asked to focus on recommending how the existing distance education units, previously supported by University Extension, could be administratively reorganized," Spain said. "The task force did not address the academic issues associated with eLearning, which includes courses designed for on-campus and/or distance delivery.

This fall, MU's Faculty Council will appoint a task force to address the academic policy issues associated with distance education and, more broadly, eLearning.

Leona Rubin, chair of the council, said the new committee will be made up of faculty members representing most campus units, including those with an existing interest in online education, as well as those who possess a "healthy reserve" about such teaching methods.

"This group initially will work to frame the academic questions, issues and concerns surrounding online education at MU, hold forums with the general faculty to discuss the issues and ultimately work with the Provost and appropriate staff to help frame policy and process," Rubin added.

- Josh Murray

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Campus prepares for gathering of best and brightest high schoolers

MISSOURI SCHOLARS ACADEMY

More than 9,000 students have participated since 1985

More than 325 high school students from across Missouri will have the opportunity of a lifetime, and perhaps more importantly, a chance to be themselves at this summer's Missouri Scholars Academy (MSA), hosted by the University of Missouri.

Ted Tarkow, director of the program and associate dean of the University of Missouri College of Arts and Science, said the Missouri Scholars Academy, or MSA, offers a place for like-minded students to expand their educational and social skills.

"Sometimes high school students feel like it's a liability to be bright and talented," Tarkow said. "The MSA validates that it's OK to be bright and talented."

MSA began in 1985, and by the end of this summer more than 9,000 Missouri students will have participated in the annual program. This year, from June 12 through July 2, students will spend the bulk of each day in an intensive classroom setting, studying one of four individually selected subjects, including mathematics, science, social studies and humanities. Each Missouri high school is allowed to nominate one -to-be for the academy; larger schools may nominate more. Nearly every county in the state is represented.

"I look back on my summer spent with you with the fondest of memories," said Erica Endicott, who attended MSA in 1997. "I think of it as one of the happiest times of my life."

Outside the classroom, students can take part in activities, workshops and discussions by guest speakers. Students will learn from experts in the fields of Islam and Scottish culture, learn the science behind NASCAR and discuss issues such as the national debt. Participants also will get the chance to visit with David Clewell, Missouri's Poet Laureate, and match wits against the Missouri state Scrabble champion.

"We want these students to go for it, to plunge right in to these great learning opportunities, to live and learn like they have never had a chance to before," Tarkow said. "We want to help them network as well as drive home the idea that being smart is a good thing."

MSA participants are among the top 0.5 percent of Missouri students academically. Tarko says individuals who attend the academy leave with the understanding that they have a responsibility to share their talents with others for the betterment of their local Missouri communities. Many MSA alumni participate in programs such as Teach for America, Peace Corps or other nonprofit organizations. MSA alumni also continue to succeed academically. Of those who are old enough, 98 percent of academy alumni have graduated from high school, 90 percent have graduated from college and nearly 2,500 alumni have earned graduate or professional degrees.

Funding for the MSA 2011 is provided by the University of Missouri and generous contributions from private groups and corporations including Ameren Missouri. This year, there is also a student activity fee assessed on all participants.

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Adding technology can improve learning in high-enrollment courses

REINVENTING HIGHER ED

Statewide initiative will share course redesigns

The University if Missouri is taking part in a statewide redesign initiative that will integrate technology into high-enrollment courses.

Under the initiative, offered through the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), one class from each of the 13 four-year institutions in Missouri will undergo a redesign. Student outcomes from those courses will be measured, and the basics of the course structure, such as the syllabus and decisions made in the course redesign, will be shared with the other institutions across the state

"The goal is to redesign a class so that students have more ways to learn and be able to demonstrate that the changes are effective," Danna Vessell, director of Educational Technologies at Missouri (ET@MO) said. "This process involves large enrollment classes taught on campus."

Larry Ries' Statistics 1200 class has been proposed as the MU course that will be redesigned through the initiative. The redesign will take place next fall, with the pilot course in place for the Spring 2012 semester.

"I have taught Stat 1200 for the past 14 years and the course works well as is," Ries said. "However, as faculty members, we must constantly reassess and reinvent the things we do. This project is an exciting opportunity to make a good course even better."

The 13 Missouri universities taking part in the redesign project are: Harris-Stowe University, Lincoln University, Missouri Southern State University, Missouri State University, the four UM System campuses, Missouri Western State University, Northwest Missouri State University, Southeast Missouri State University, Truman State University and University of Central Missouri.

Because many potential course projects were submitted for redesign, MU has also implemented its own course redesign program. ET@MO will work with five on-campus courses to promote student-centered learning and enhance the effective use of technology in those classes.

"We will be conducting a redesign for five courses on campus," Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies, said. "The instructors will be working with ET@MO to change the technological elements used in those courses, and redesign the learning experiences for students, which will be focused on improving student learning outcomes."

While the five courses are being redesigned as part a campus program and are not part of the statewide project, they will follow guidelines similar to those set forth by NCAT.

"The ultimate goal is to improve the courses to improve student learning," Spain concluded.

- Josh Murray

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"This is Your Brain on Violent Video Games"

PSYCHOLOGY

Research warns of increased aggression

Scientists have known for years that playing violent video games causes players to become more aggressive. A new study by University of Missouri researchers offers one explanation: the brains of violent video game players become less responsive to violence, and this diminished brain response predicts an increase in aggression.

"Many researchers have believed that becoming desensitized to violence leads to increased human aggression, said Bruce Bartholow, associate professor of psychology in the MU College of Arts and Science. "Until our study, however, this causal association had never been demonstrated experimentally."

During the study, 70 young adults were randomly assigned to play either a nonviolent or a violent video game for 25 minutes. Immediately afterwards, the researchers measured brain responses as participants viewed a series of neutral photos, such as a man on a bike, and violent photos, such as a man holding a gun in another man's mouth. Finally, participants competed against an opponent in a task that allowed them to give their opponent a controllable blast of loud noise. The level of noise blast the participants set for their opponent was the measure of aggression.

The researchers found that participants who played one of several popular violent games, such as "Call of Duty," "Hitman," "Killzone" and "Grand Theft Auto," set louder noise blasts for their opponents during the competitive task – that is, they were more aggressive – than participants who played a nonviolent game. In addition, for participants who had not played many violent video games before completing the study, playing a violent game in the lab caused a reduced brain response to the photos of violence – an indicator of desensitization.

Moreover, this reduced brain response predicted participants' aggression levels: the smaller the brain response to violent photos, the more aggressive participants were. Participants who had already spent a lot of time playing violent video games before the study showed small brain response to the violent photos, regardless of which type of game they played in the lab.

Batholow said the fact that video game exposure did not affect the brain activity of participants who already had been highly exposed to violent games suggests a number of possibilities.

"It could be that those individuals are already so desensitized to violence from habitually playing violent video games that an additional exposure in the lab has very little effect on their brain responses," he said. "There also could be an unmeasured factor that causes both a preference for violent video games and a smaller brain response to violence. In either case, there are additional measures to consider."

Bartholow said that future research should focus on ways to moderate media violence effects, especially among individuals who are habitually exposed. He cites surveys that indicate that the average elementary school child spends more than 40 hours a week playing video games – more than any other activity besides sleeping. As young children spend more time with video games than any other forms of media, the researchers say children could become accustomed to violent behavior as their brains are forming.

"More than any other media, these video games encourage active participation in violence," said Bartholow. "From a psychological perspective, video games are excellent teaching tools because they reward players for engaging in certain types of behavior. Unfortunately, in many popular video games, the behavior is violence."

Other authors in the study include Christopher Engelhardt, graduate student in the MU Department of Psychological Sciences, and researchers from The Ohio State University and VU University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The journal article, "This Is Your Brain on Violent Video Games: Neural Desensitization to Violence Predicts Increased Aggression Following Violent Video Game Exposure," will be published in a forthcoming edition of the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

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MU students can CASH in on campus jobs

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Program helps students, understaffed departments

When the state of the economy took a downward turn, Mizzou stepped up.

In August of 2009, in response to financial hardships faced by students and departments on campus, the MU Economic Downturn Work Team, Division of Student Affairs and Career Center collaborated to establish the Campus Augmenting Student Hires (CASH) program.

In the program, campus departments hire students for on-campus jobs. The CASH program matches funds up to \$500 per semester making every job within the program eligible for a maximum of \$1,000 per year. Therefore, when the department contribution is factored in, a student can earn up to \$2,000 annually.

"Many faculty and staff recognize the value of student workers," MU Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs said. "We believe that we can utilize the many skills and abilities of students for jobs on campus more effectively."

A total of 669 student positions have been created since the inception of the program. The positions encompass a variety of positions, including graphic designers, lab researchers and assistants, tutors, peer advisors, reporters and support staff.

Over 100 departments on the University of Missouri campus have participated in CASH and the Career Center staff estimates that students have earned more than \$1 million through the program.

The funding for CASH comes from realized administrative efficiencies and revenue enhancement activities on the collections process around the student account.

"Ultimately, we made changes in the way we assess finance charges, calculate late payment fees, process credit card payments and interact with the collection agencies," Paul Toler, MU's director of business services, said. "These changes created income streams and cost-savings opportunities we were able to turn into funding for the Excellence Scholarship, as well as the CASH student employment program."

The benefits for the student are numerous. They gain real-world experience, while applying the skills learned in the classroom. For those uncertain of their career plans, part-time jobs can lead students to decisions about a future major or career.

Michelle Slinkard, who graduates in May, worked as a student reporter for the Graduate School communications office.

"I have been able to develop my own journalistic skills, while also helping the graduate school complete their initiatives," Slinkard said. "It's been a great place to spend my spare time and I have really learned a lot."

On-campus jobs provide students with a support system and a smaller community that aids with student retention. Furthermore, students earn financial benefits that enable them to continue their educational experiences.

"I'm hoping to pursue a career in broadcast journalism," Jessica Hord, a senior working with the communication office of the MU Graduate School, said. "With this position, not only am I interviewing and shooting video of people, but I'm also doing lots of writing — both key elements to hone for my future career."

The value of student workers has been seen by faculty and staff that have taken part in the CASH program.

"This is our second successful year with the CASH program," Robin Walker, communications and external relations director for the MU Graduate School, said. "Even though they only work eight hours a week, the students have been exceptional performers and have helped us accomplish several goals. Foremost they have enabled us to better publicized graduate students' achievements with multimedia profiles on our site and social media. CASH is an excellent example of how Mizzou partnerships can work to the benefit of our students."

The program has provided additional opportunity to find student workers.

"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," Scroggs said.

Mizzou's German and Russian Studies department is another component on campus that has reaped the benefits of the program.

"We teach film studies in this department, and the majority of our other courses also include a strong audio/video component, so having someone in this position is most useful to the department," said Jennifer Arnold of the German and Russian Studies department.

Officials at MU are unaware of any other university that has a program similar to CASH.

"Mizzou designated funding and created meaningful job opportunities for students that helped alleviate some of the financial strain on campus departments by offering additional manpower," Amanda Nell of the MU Career Center said. "This is what makes the program so very unique and positive."

Campus departments can email the MU Career Center at career@missouri.edu to find out more details of the CASH program.

- Josh Murray

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Quail summit will explore habitat management

The 2011 University of Missouri Bobwhite Quail Summit and Native Plant Field Day will be held June 16 at MU's Bradford Farm.

The quail summit, from 1-4 p.m., will cover such topics as surrogator research; maintaining brood habitat; weather patterns and quail; private land quail-restoration successes; how to fund your quail management plan; and quail hunting tips.

The field day, from 4-8 p.m., will feature wagon tours of habitat management techniques that have created the mixture of plant communities bobwhites need for nesting, feeding and protection from predators. Topics will include landscaping and enhancing wildlife with native plants; plant diversity and pollinators for birds and insects; managing native grasses and tall fescue renovation; field and waterway management; managing field borders for wildlife and profit; wildlife practices and pond management on your farm.

Both events are free and open to the public. Registration is not required for the field day but summit attendees should RSVP to MU BREC, 4968 Rangeline Road, Columbia, MO 65201-8973 or ChismT@missouri.edu, or call 573-884-7945.

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Social science experts to discuss racism

The scientific study of racism has evolved from the use of questionnaires that ask about race-related attitudes to sophisticated, computerized tasks designed to uncover hidden or implicit racial biases that respondents are either unwilling or unable to report.

Such methods have proliferated in the past 20 years and have even begun to capture the public's imagination. On June 14, the Implicit Racial Bias symposium will bring together experts in the fields of social cognition and cognitive science to discuss the issues and present their latest research findings.

Speakers include: B. Keith Payne, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; Jeffrey Sherman, University of California-Davis; Tiffany Ito, University of Colorado; Akira Miyake, University of Colorado; Joshua Correll, University of Chicago; and Bruce Bartholow, University of Missouri.

The symposium starts at 8 a.m. in Tucker Forum, Gannet Hall. For more information, contact Bruce Bartholow at 573-882-1805.

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