

Mizzou Weekly

Oct. 24, 2013 Volume 35, No. 10

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Rikoon also is a Curators Distinguished Professor of rural sociology in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at MU. In addition, he is the director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security at MU, the only university center in the U.S. that integrates education, research and outreach activities on domestic food security. His research focuses on diverse aspects of food, environmental problems and public policy issues in the Midwestern U.S. and Eastern Europe.

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Halloween for kids

[The State Historical Society \(http://shs.umsystem.edu/index.shtml\)](http://shs.umsystem.edu/index.shtml) will host from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Oct. 29 in Ellis Library “Trick or Treat Through Missouri History.”

The free event for kids and adults will explore some of the spookiness of the state’s history and tradition, from fortunetellers to cave bats.

The free event also includes treats, a Kid’s Cave, and an appearance by museum curator Joan Stack as a ghost from Missouri’s past. Visitors are encouraged to dress Halloween-style.

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Give to United Way

The MU/UM United Way Campaign has a fundraising goal of \$800,000 by Nov. 30.

Makes donations at unitedway.missouri.edu (<https://secureas.missouri.edu/unitedway/>). “Be the One, Live United” T-shirts for sale at The Mizzou Store in the Student Center.

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Blood drive success

The 28th -annual Mizzou Homecoming Blood Drive last week had great turnout. The four-day drive collected 5,739 units of blood, a record, said Todd McCubbin, executive director of the Mizzou Alumni Association.

“We also celebrated our 100,000th unit of blood over the life of the drive,” McCubbin said. “Pretty remarkable accomplishment by the Mizzou family.”

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Annual enrollment benefits

Through Nov. 1, submit changes to benefits by going to umsystem.edu/totalrewards/ae (<http://umsystem.edu/totalrewards/ae>).

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Flu shots

Get your flu shot at a below location:

- Oct. 31, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Memorial Union, Stotler Lounge
- Nov. 4, 11 a.m.–12 p.m., 216 Heinkel Building

Go to umsystem.edu/curators/wellness (<http://umsystem.edu/curators/wellness>) and click on Flu Shot Schedule for more.

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Brain imaging device enhances neurosurgery at University Hospital

The precision of the fMRI allows doctors to fine-tune treatment

University Hospital has acquired central Missouri's first functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) system for diagnosing and treating patients with complex neurological conditions.

The fMRI produces 3-D images of a patient's brain that show not only the physical structure of the brain, but also detect neurological activity and illustrate which portions of the brain control specific activities. The system, which uses advanced electromagnetic and radiofrequency technology to create the images, has only been utilized by medical doctors for less than a decade.

The technology is used by the [Missouri Neurosciences Center \(http://www.muhealth.org/default_neuro.cfm?id=7263\)](http://www.muhealth.org/default_neuro.cfm?id=7263), a 28-bed hospital unit dedicated to the comprehensive treatment of neurological conditions. The center is the home of mid-Missouri's largest team of specialists in neurosurgery and neurology.

"Functional MRI gives us an image of a patient's brain while also showing us precisely which areas control activity — such as speech, hearing and movement — with those areas 'lighting up' on the images," said Ajay Aggarwal, a radiologist at MU Health Care trained in fMRI use.

"Locating specific regions of activity is especially important when treating patients with certain neurological conditions, such as brain tumors, epilepsy and arteriovenous malformation."

Scott Litofsky, chief of the neurosurgery division in the School of Medicine and director of neuro-oncology and radiosurgery at MU Health Care, uses fMRI images when determining treatment plans for patients with tumors in certain areas of the brain. Based on existing science, neurosurgeons know generally which areas of the brain control which activities; for example, the occipital lobe at the back of the brain processes vision. However, the exact locations of those regions vary from person to person.

"If I have a patient with a tumor that I know is near the part of the brain that controls speech, then I want to know exactly how close it is," Litofsky said. "It could be a quarter-inch away, or the tumor might be invading that area."

"If the tumor is very close, I may remove part of it surgically and treat the remaining portion with radiation therapy," he continued. "But if there is enough space between them, I may remove the entire tumor through surgery. Functional MRI can tell me exactly where the tumor is located and exactly where the speech area is located. That helps me achieve my goal of removing as much of the tumor as possible without affecting my patient's speech."

The technology can also detect changes in blood flow. When a patient speaks inside an fMRI machine, for example, the device detects the extra blood sent to that region of the brain. A computer system illustrates this additional information on the MRI image by highlighting the active portion of the patient's brain using different colors, such as red and yellow, which indicate the amount of activity in that portion of the brain.

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High-protein food makes for the best snacks, research shows

Each day, many Americans grab an afternoon snack.

Now, research from the University of Missouri shows that snacking on higher-protein foods, such as certain types of Greek yogurt, can increase the feeling of fullness and the amount of time between meals.

“The rise in obesity in the United States has closely mirrored an increase in snacking among adults,” said Heather Leidy, author of the study and an assistant professor in the [Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology](http://ns.missouri.edu/) (<http://ns.missouri.edu/>).

“Experts have known for a while that eating meals high in protein can help people lose weight and keep it off. Because snacking is so common, we wanted to see whether high-protein snacks would help people control their appetites — an important factor in weight management.”

To examine the effect on hunger of eating protein-rich snacks, researchers studied a group of healthy women, ages 24 to 28, who ate three different types of yogurt versus no snack. One of the snacks was traditional yogurt with a relatively low amount of protein (five grams).

The other two snacks were Greek-style yogurts that contained either a moderate amount of protein (14 grams) or a high amount of protein (24 grams). Each yogurt snack contained 160 calories.

On the day of each test, the participants ate the same breakfast of a quesadilla and fruit, then a sandwich, chips and applesauce for lunch.

Three hours after lunch, the participants ate either no snack, or a low-, medium- or high-protein yogurt snack. Every 30 minutes after the snack, the participants completed questionnaires to determine their hunger, fullness and whether they were ready for dinner.

Consuming the high-protein Greek yogurt snack had the greatest effect.

After eating the snack, participants felt full the longest and took the longest amount of time to request dinner, which was three hours after lunch.

The effect after eating low- or medium-protein snacks was smaller than with high-protein yogurt, but participants still stayed full longer and took more time to feel hungry after eating a low- or medium-protein snack than after eating no snack. After eating a low- or medium-protein snack, they also took longer to request dinner — two and a half hours after snack time, compared to two hours after having no snack.

“These results show low-, medium- and high-protein snacks all increase the length of time before a person feels hungry again,” Leidy said. “But if you are looking to feel full and stave off hunger for the longest, you should eat a snack with at least 24 grams of protein.”

Leidy suggests using plain-flavored yogurts and sweetening them with fruit and granola instead of pre-flavored yogurts, which usually are high in sugar and calories.

She also recommends checking nutrition labels because single-serving yogurt packages usually don't contain 24 grams of protein, so you may need to eat more than one serving. The body doesn't appear to recognize snacks of less than 160 calories, so they won't help control hunger, Leidy said.

The article, "Low, Moderate, or High Protein Yogurt Snacks on Appetite Control and Subsequent Eating in Healthy Women," was published in the journal *Appetite*.

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Television health news can raise more questions than answers, professor says

Research has shown that the most popular way Americans get their health news is by watching local television.

Now, researchers at the University of Missouri School of Journalism have found that while local television news is the most common source of health news for Americans, most health news stories on local news broadcasts are only 30 seconds or less in length.

Glen Cameron, the Maxine Wilson Gregory Chair in Journalism Research and professor of strategic communication at the MU School of Journalism, said this trend may lead to misunderstanding of important but complicated health news stories.

“This pattern of local health news reporting may be problematic because of the complex and rather technical nature of many health news stories,” Cameron said.

“For example, there is much medical jargon such as ‘pseudoephedrine,’ ‘dementia’ or ‘cardiovascular arrest’ involved with reporting health news; stories that are too short can leave viewers confused and inappropriately alarmed or complacent. In this sense, health news may need to be allocated more time to be truly beneficial to viewers.”

Cameron also found that health news stories that dealt with advancements or treatments were mainly reported using gain-framed messages while stories about statistics and trends were mainly reported by loss-framed messages.

Gain-framed messages communicate by giving positive reasons for avoiding a harmful behavior, while loss-framed messages focus on the negative consequences of continuing a harmful behavior.

An example of a gain-framed message the H1N1, or the Swine Flu, epidemic. Due to concerns about the flu outbreak, an increased number of gain-framed reports, including information on how to prevent catching H1N1, were successful in helping to lessen the impact of the outbreak.

“One of the important things about health news stories is whether they provide specific directions and successfully encourage viewers to take healthy actions,” Cameron said.

“The more self-efficacy people have, the more control they believe they have over their behavior, which can lead to positive behavior change.”

This study was published in *Health Communication*.

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Professor receives fellowship award to investigate use of hearing aids

Researcher hopes to end stigma surrounding hearing aid use

Nearly half of individuals who are prescribed hearing aids do not wear the devices, research has shown. A University of Missouri researcher has received a fellowship that will help her continue her work to increase hearing-aid use among adults with hearing impairments.

The National Hartford Centers of Gerontological Nursing Excellence recently named Kari Lane, assistant professor of nursing in the Sinclair School of Nursing, a Claire M. Fagin Fellow. The awards are given to four gerontological nurses each year who specialize in diverse health care areas. Each fellow receives \$120,000 to support research training, mentorship, leadership and career development.

Previously, Lane developed an intervention and self-guided workbook that help adults with hearing impairments acclimate to hearing aids. The fellowship award will allow Lane to test the effectiveness of the intervention and see to what extent it increases adults' hearing-aid use.

Lane said several factors contribute to why some individuals do not use their hearing aids or why they only wear the devices occasionally.

"When adults with hearing impairments begin wearing hearing aids, they hear things that they aren't used to hearing, which can be overwhelming, fatiguing and frustrating," Lane said. "In addition, the cost to purchase and maintain the devices is high, and multiple appointments to fit the hearing aids can also cause stress."

Despite obstacles that prevent individuals from using their hearing aids, the devices give those with hearing impairments an enhanced quality of life that is worth the time and money needed to adjust to the devices, Lane said.

"People think wearing hearing aids makes them old," Lane said. "It's important to reduce the stigma associated with wearing hearing aids so more people use the devices. The sooner individuals receive treatment for their hearing problems, the better their outcomes are."

If the intervention she developed proves effective, Lane said she hopes to train others how to use the workbook and accompanying intervention. Ideally, she would like to train individuals at audiological clinics who could educate and assist persons with hearing impairments so they continue using the devices.

— *Jesslyn Chew*

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Truman's Closet dresses patrons for success



Some of Truman's Closet staff, from left: Mikala Vaughn, Lanre Shitta-Bey, Brianna Donahue, Charles Hall, Sean Joy (sitting), Sarah Snow, Curtis Jones, Heather Parrie and Lauren Alexander. Photo by Naveen Mahadevan.

Donations are accepted at the Rock Quarry Road location during business hours three days a week

The University of Missouri is doing a lot for people as the holiday season approaches.

[Tiger Pantry \(http://tigerpantry.missouri.edu/\)](http://tigerpantry.missouri.edu/), 1400 Rock Quarry Road, supplies nonperishable food for the hungry. Staffed by MU students, the pantry is part of the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri, which receives funding from the [Heart of Missouri United Way \(http://www.uwheartmo.org/\)](http://www.uwheartmo.org/). On Oct. 1, [Truman's Closet \(http://msa.missouri.edu/trumans-closet/\)](http://msa.missouri.edu/trumans-closet/) opened as part of Tiger Pantry.

Truman's Closet rents business attire to the MU community, though most of its customers are students. The occasion might be a job interview, a conference or a presentation.

Donations can be made at the Center for Student Involvement at the MU Student Center or at Truman's Closet during operating hours: 2:30–5 p.m. Sunday, 9–noon Tuesday, and 3–6 p.m. Thursday. Items most needed are suits, slacks, heels, shoes and dresses.

Plans are to open a Truman's Closet in the Student Center for easier access, said Kathleen Kowalsky, coordinator for Truman's Closet and a sophomore studying textile and apparel management.

Volunteers for Truman's Closet help customers choose an outfit based on the event they're attending, and help them prepare mentally by asking interview prep questions.

"When you walk into an interview, the first thing they're going to see is what you're wearing," Kowalsky said.

However, she said, Truman's Closet wants to take that first impression a step further by helping students not only look professional but also feel confident and behave professionally.

The program is partnering with departments on campus, such as the MU Career Center, to host monthly educational events.

"We wanted this to be something that could inspire students and promote our values at the university — respect, responsibility, discovery and excellence — in every way possible," says Sean Joy, director of student services and a graduate student studying occupational therapy.

Before Truman's Closet opened, scores of students signed a poster in the MU Student Center in support of the new resource.

In January 2012, Nick Droege, then director of student services and now Missouri Student Association president, returned from the SEC Student Government Exchange with two big ideas: a campus food assistance program (which launched last October as Tiger Pantry) and a business-attire lending program.

When Joy stepped into the position of director of student services, he took the reins to implement Truman's Closet.

"When Nick created the pantry, they did some research and found statistics about food insecurity on campus," he said.

If research shows that the MU community could benefit from a food-assistance program, Joy said, they likely have other crucial needs that resources such as Truman's Closet can fill.

"We want to provide every student with the opportunity to be successful," Joy said. "Some people can't afford to go out and buy new things. Or maybe they're nervous [about their economic situation] and don't know what to purchase."

Joy assembled a team to make the program a reality, starting with Kowalsky as coordinator. "I wanted someone that really could get people excited and motivate people to want to be a better professional in many ways," Joy said.

The rest of the team includes six additional executive board members and 18 volunteers.

"One thing that is so special about our school is that we embrace everyone," Joy said. "This project has really given me the chance to see that in a different way. We are supportive of one another. We are One Mizzou."



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Table grapes could be the next crop for Missouri's fruit industry



Andy Thomas, horticulturist at the Southwest Research Center, examines grapes at the center's two-acre vineyard. Thomas is assisting in a study to determine which types of table grapes Missouri growers should raise. Photo by Kyle Spradley.

Missouri has long been known as the Show-Me State. More recently, it has been recognized for its geology and nicknamed the Cave State. Someday it might be known as the Grape State.

In the mid 1800s German immigrants established some of the first wineries around Hermann. Today, more than 120 wineries across the state could classify Missouri as one of the country's elite wine producers. And for almost as long as there have been vineyards, the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) has been part of Missouri vino.

From the state's first entomologist C.V. Riley, an MU professor who helped save the French wine industry, to the work from the MU Grape and Wine Institute, CAFNR is leading the way for research and growth of the Missouri wine industry.

"While wine grape production is well-established in Missouri, the production of seedless pop-in-your-mouth table grapes is just beginning," says Andrew Thomas, horticulturist at the Southwest Research Center in Mt. Vernon. "Very few people are growing table grapes in the state; therefore, a huge untapped market is available for producers."

At the center in 2008, Thomas established a two-acre vineyard for research on wine-grape varieties and rootstocks. Within the large vineyard, a row of tables was also planted, and a second table grape harvest was recently completed. A similar study is also taking place at the Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Center in New Franklin.

"We planted several table grape varieties including Mars, a seedless Arkansas variety that is the standard grown in some parts of the Midwest," Thomas said. "The rest are experimental selections from Cornell University. We planted yellow, purple and pink grapes and are evaluating their performance under southwest Missouri conditions."

Some of the grapes are similar to the popular Concord, which often are found in juices and jams. Others have a very different, even sweeter taste with a "muscat" and smoky finish.

“We also get to taste-test the grapes,” Thomas said. “They taste just spectacular and I would take these grapes over any you can buy in stores.”



Missouri has a rich history of raising grapes. Experts see a market in table grapes for state growers.

Photo by Kyle Spradley

The costs to implement rows of table grapes are similar to that of wine grapes. They require the same trellising and irrigation systems and could be a great addition to vineyards. A bonus to growing table grapes is that they can be harvested two to three weeks ahead of many other grapes, thus creating an added flow of income.

One of the main goals of the research is to find out which varieties work best in Missouri for growers such as Mike Rippelmeyer, who owns 4M Vineyards & Farms in St. James.

“We have close to an acre of Mars and other Arkansas varieties that are producing about seven tons an acre a year,” Rippelmeyer said. “We are looking to expand into other varieties to gear ourselves for the future of the industry.”

Since 1909, 4M Vineyards has been growing grapes and now boasts 19 acres of more than a dozen different varieties. Concord has historically been the top seller for the vineyard near St. James. But as times change, so has the market.

“We are seeing less people buying ConCORDs and looking to try the new varieties,” Rippelmeyer said. “These new varieties could really get people into something different.”

For many growers like Rippelmeyer, the key to table grapes is finding a market. Some varieties have a short shelf life and need to be refrigerated after picking. That means it’s crucial to find buyers before planting. Once refrigerated, however, most table grapes can be kept in good condition for up to three weeks in cold storage to help increase potential sales opportunities.

Once a producer brings high-quality, locally grown table grapes to any market, they would sell quickly if free samples are provided, Rippelmeyer said.

Compared to most grapes sold in grocery stores, the varieties being studied at the Southwest Research Center are a much higher quality.

Thomas suggested that winery owners stock the table grapes for resale, and retailers sell them at farmers markets.

Rippelmeyer said that the “locavore” trend is booming right now and any locally grown products would do well for farmers across Missouri.

“Virtually none of the grapes you buy in stores are from Missouri,” Rippelmeyer said. “Why can’t we get more Missouri-made products to our consumers? I really hope that in the future the market for these grapes expands. It’s always great to support the local folks.”

— *Kyle Spradley*

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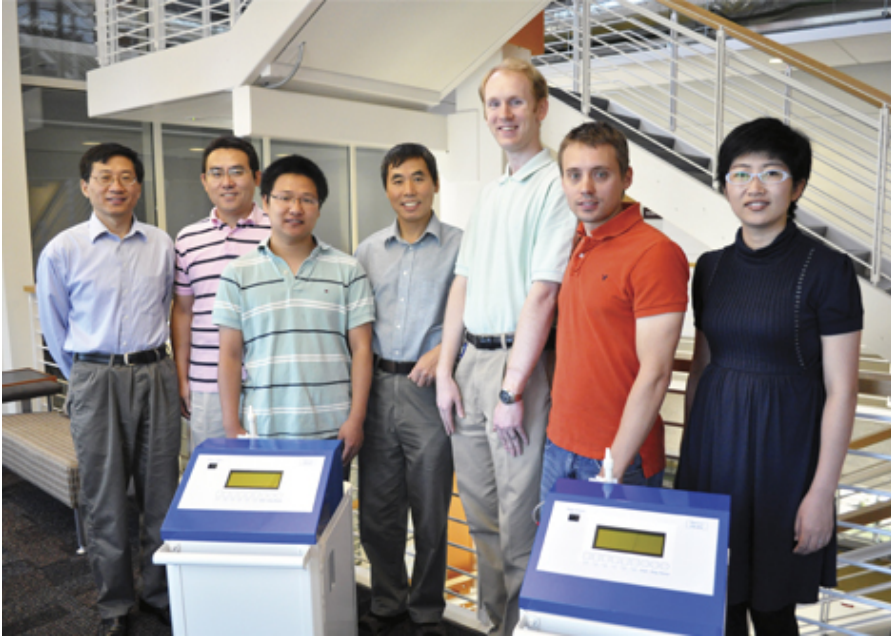
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Research team creates dental and orthopedic products



The research team working to bring the plasma dental brush into commercial use includes, from left, Meng Chen, chief scientist with Nanova Inc.; Hao Li, associate professor of mechanical engineering; Qing Hong, mechanical engineering doctoral candidate; Qingsong Yu, associate professor of mechanical engineering; Andrew Ritts, senior research scientist with Nanova Inc.; Adam Blumhagen, mechanical engineering doctoral candidate; and Xiaoqing Dong, postdoctoral fellow. *Photo courtesy of the College of Engineering.*

Earlier this year, the high-tech biomaterials firm received a \$7 million investment from a company in China

When Hao Li walked into the [Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers](http://www.missouribusiness.net/sbt/dc/) (<http://www.missouribusiness.net/sbt/dc/>) in 2005, he had a specific goal in mind. Li, an associate professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at MU's College of Engineering, wanted to take the fruits of his lab research to the marketplace.

Working closely with Jim Gann, technology business specialist at the center, Li in 2007 incorporated Nanova, a research firm of orthopedic and dental devices. In early 2013, Nanova secured a \$7 million investment from the Chinese venture capital firm SummitView Capital.

Li's achievement of launching a company is happening at MU more often, Gann said. Recently MU faculty have been involved in launching the companies Beyond Meat and Nanocine.

"We'll be seeing more and more of this, which is consistent with the university's strategies in economic development and commercialization of its own technology," Gann said.

The Big Picture

In 1996, Hao Li was a graduate student working on dental implants at one of the top engineering schools in China. He earned his doctorate at Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey and pursued post-doctoral studies at Brown University in Rhode Island, where his research focused on synthesis, characterization and application of aerospace composites and nanomaterials.



Andrew Ritts demonstrates the plasma dental brush, which in less than 30 seconds can disinfect and clean cavity holes before fillings are placed. *Photo courtesy of the College of Engineering.*

But from a young age, Li knew he wanted to run his own company. While at Stevens and Brown, he took management and business courses.

“The driving force is not only about business,” Li said. “I want to see my research make an impact on society and help people.”

Li joined the MU faculty in 2005 and started connecting with people who had similar goals: Qingsong Yu, associate professor of mechanical engineering; Meng Chen, an electrical engineer; and Kenneth Lambert, an orthopedist.

Working together to research and design groundbreaking dental, cardiovascular and orthopedic devices using nanotechnology and plasma technology, the team received funding from National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and MU.

With the help of numerous grants, the team was ready to commercialize the medical devices created in the lab. Li reached out to Jim Gann for help. Gann, a management consultant for faculty entrepreneurs, vividly recalled his first conversations with Li.

“He would come in with complex questions about the strategy of business formation that most startups would not be so mature to ask,” Gann said. “There was strategy behind his choices that is pretty esoteric in the business world that you wouldn’t expect a nanotechnologist to understand, not even an MBA student.”

Gann described his consulting as less transaction and more strategic. Li and Gann collaborated on analyzing the marketplace, writing a business plan and developing investor relationships. Nanova was incorporated six years ago.

Promising Future

With the ultimate goal of building better medical devices while also helping researchers commercialize those devices, Li knew he was going to need an economic investment and a strategic partnership.

“We have quality research, we have good prototypes, we understand the marketing need and we have good credibility,” Li said.

After presenting Nanova’s work to several venture capital companies, and receiving several offers, Nanova secured a \$7 million investment from SummitView Capital in Changzhou, China. Changzhou is home to about 200 medical device companies, two of which were recently acquired for \$700 million each.

“They’re not as strong in research and development. We’re strong in research and development but don’t necessarily understand the market,” Li said. “There are a lot of opportunities. The city is very interested in making a connection with MU and Columbia. I want to be the bridge.”

Along with the investment came a memorandum on understanding among the city of Columbia, MU and Changzhou, which Li said signifies the possible partnerships in terms of research, trade and economic development.

As Nanova grows, moving forward with orthopedic and dental devices being cleared by the Food and Drug Administration, Li will continue to seek funding for other projects. The current project funded by the venture capital firm is based on nanofiber reinforced composite technology. Nanofibers are composed of calcium phosphate, the same material as bone and tooth minerals, and are 1,000 times smaller than a human hair. They are also stronger than stainless steel, Li said.

Nanova is also working on other innovations, including coronary stents to fight restenosis and thrombosis and a plasma brush, a dental instrument that in less than 30 seconds can disinfect and clean cavity holes before fillings are placed. The cleaning could decrease dental care costs by helping fillings last longer.

The global medical device market is estimated to reach \$440 billion by 2018, growing at about 4.4 percent per year; the annual growth rate of China's medical device industry is forecast to be more than 20 percent in the coming five to 10 years.

"Based on those numbers, you can imagine there are significant opportunities," Li said.

— Kelsey Allen

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University of Missouri System exec meets with Faculty Council for first time

Hank Foley, executive vice president for academic affairs, started with the UM System on Aug. 5

Hank Foley, executive vice president for academic affairs for the University of Missouri System, was the guest at the Faculty Council meeting Oct. 17 in Memorial Union.

Foley started at MU on Aug. 5. He had been at Penn State for 13 years. Since 2009, he was vice president for research and dean of Penn State's Graduate School

For about 40 minutes, Foley talked mostly of research strategies, shared governance and raising MU's standing in the Association of American Universities.

Though acknowledging the scrutiny currently on federal dollars for university research, Foley wants to see MU "open up more time for scholarship and research," he said.

He also spoke of his strategies toward the byproducts of research such as intellectual property rights. "We didn't need to own IP unless faculty said we should," Foley said of how it worked at Penn State.

He sees similarities between Penn State's and MU's entrepreneurial spirit. "Growing our own [businesses] is the best approach," Foley said.

One of his goals is to better MU's AAU ranking so the university can become "a magnet for bright young faculty," he said.

Finally, Harry Tyrer, professor of electrical and chemical engineering, raised the topic of shared governance.

Foley said at Penn State he implemented "town hall meetings" with faculty to keep them informed of administrative discussions. Sometimes he hosted pre-meetings to the formal meetings to offer background to faculty.

In other news, Dennis Miller, associate professor of psychology, submitted an open letter to council for approval asking the chancellor that Faculty Council have a voice in who will be MU's next provost. Provost Brian Foster is retiring effective Jan. 1, 2014.

In addition, council passed a motion 18-3 allowing the College of Arts and Sciences to pursue introducing a supplemental fee to students.

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School of Medicine staff member and spouse open winery



Jennifer and Chris West are training Mizzou graduate Kayla Murphy Swantz to be the head winemaker at the Macon location. Photo by Nicholas Benner.

West Winery began in 2007 in Macon, Mo., and now has eight employees

When Jennifer and Chris West got married in 1998, Chris wasn't old enough to partake in the champagne toasts. Fifteen years later, the couple is receiving awards for the wine they're producing at West Winery — winner of the 2013 Best of *Rural Missouri* Editor's Choice award for best winery.

Jennifer, a donor relations coordinator for the School of Medicine, and Chris first forayed into the world of winemaking just for kicks. The first batch of wine, blood orange, made in their kitchen didn't turn out well.

"We saved it because it was just so horrible," Jennifer said. "I think you could clean a toilet with it. It was just bad."

Still, with a little guidance from the winemakers at Les Bourgeois Winery and Vineyards in Rocheport, Mo., and many hours spent researching online, the couple learned how to find the right kind of yeast, control the temperature and make five-gallon batches of their favorite wine.

In 2004, Chris entered a blackberry wine sample in his first amateur competition at Les Bourgeois and won.

"We always knew we wanted to start a winery, but we thought maybe we would when we retired," Jennifer said.

A Growing Business

When Chris lost his job in 2007, the Wests seized the opportunity to open West Winery. They took the money they had been saving to one day send Jennifer to law school, cut out date night — the last movie they saw in theaters was the 2005 Star Wars film — and got to work.

In 2007, they opened West Winery in a 1880s building in the heart of Chris' hometown of Macon, Mo., making it the first urban winemaking facility in Missouri. Chris worked full time winemaking, and Jennifer worked part time in the tasting room and doing the books.

Chris described it as a "large small-medium" winery. They typically carry 12 wines in 300 to 500 gallon batches. By focusing on smaller batches — an average batch at Les Bourgeois is anywhere from 500 to 5,000 gallons — the couple can experiment with different blends.

The most popular wines are the sweet ones: the semisweet pear, the spiced apple and strawberry vidal. But Chris' favorite is the dry red chambourcin. The Wests source their fruit from local growers across the state, including a vineyard in Macon, an apple orchard in Kansas City and a blackberry farm in Kirksville.

"We're trying to get Missouri on the map," Chris said. "It's about making people realize Missouri wine is really good wine."

Donor Relations Benefits

People are taking notice. In 2008, they partnered with Jackson Stables to open a second location along the Rainbow Basin trail in Kirksville, Mo. In 2011, they partnered with the Mark Twain Cave Complex in Hannibal to open Cave Hollow West Winery, where they offer their standard selections as well as an exclusive Mark Twain series, including the Mark Twain Reserve and An Innocent Broad. They now have eight employees and are training Mizzou graduate Kayla Murphy Swantz to be the head winemaker at the Macon location.

Jennifer said the most surprising thing about running three business locations and raising their 3-year-old son is how comfortable she got with little sleep. For the first five years, she would work her Mizzou job until 5 p.m. on Friday, hop in the car and drive to Macon where she'd work in the tasting room for the weekend, and then return to Columbia on Sunday evening for work Monday.

Her winery work has opened her eyes to her donor relations job at MU.

West Winery has made more than 200 donations to charities, Jennifer said. The couple knows how frustrating it can be to donate to a cause and not know how the donation is being used — sometimes not even receiving a thank you or acknowledgement of receipt. When working with people who donate to MU, Jennifer is sure to offer plenty of thank yous. "I get to see how being appreciated does impact the other side," she said. "It opens your eyes to how your donors' minds work."

The Wests don't have plans to slow down anytime soon. They just broke into the Kansas City market and sell their products to more than 100 retailers across the northern part of the state. Columbia, St. Louis and Springfield are next on their to-do list.

"I won't say it doesn't feel like work. I think people are lying when they say that," Jennifer said. "But it's really enjoyable. It's a labor of love."

— *Kelsey Allen*



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