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Radioactive spill termed as 'low risk'

University restricts area near site of lab incident.

By Janese Heavin

Thursday, November 5, 2009

Schlundt Hall Annex on the University of Missouri campus remained roped off today as crews continued to clean up low-risk radioactive material spilled Monday evening.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said a researcher spilled phosphorus-32 — a common research material — Monday evening. Before he realized it, the researcher tracked the material on his shoe outside before returning to the lab, where he discovered the spill.

Basi isn't sure when the researcher discovered the spill but said he immediately called MU Environmental Health and Safety to report it. Basi said he didn't know who the researcher was, but the spill happened in the lab of Frank Schmidt, a professor of biochemistry.

"People who handle this material are authorized and trained to use it," he said. "We're trying to determine not only how the spill happened, but how the material got tracked. ... Those are the questions we'll be asking: How did it happen, and what do we need to do to make sure it never happens again?"

Access to the annex and six labs has been restricted, but classes resumed in Schlundt Hall, a chemistry building.

Basi said administrators don't think anyone is at risk.

"We don't have any reason to believe anyone should be concerned about their personal health," he said.

Phosphorus-32 is a beta emitter used in medical, agricultural and other life sciences research. It's commonly found in fertilizers.

"It's a very low-risk radioactive material," said Kit Wagar, spokesman for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

State environmental health specialists do not consider the MU incident a big deal, Wagar said.

“It’s not externally hazardous,” he said. “Clothes and shoes protect you, and even if the skin is exposed, it doesn’t infiltrate the skin. ... To be dangerous, you’d have to ingest — literally eat — significant amounts of it.”

Still, Basi said, cleanup crews will remove exposed materials such as flooring or doorknobs, and other nearby areas will be washed down. Cleanup won’t stop until crews are 100 percent sure the area is safe, he said.

“Health and safety is our No. 1 priority for faculty, staff and students,” Basi said. “We’re cleaning the area in a very detailed manner to make sure the material poses absolutely no threat to anyone.”

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On-campus radioactive spill decontaminated

A researcher carried an isotope Monday outside the Schlundt Annex.

By Zach Toombs

Published Nov. 6, 2009

The MU Environmental Health and Safety Department is working to decontaminate an area inside and around Schlundt Hall Annex where low-risk radioactive material was spilled Monday.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said a researcher accidentally spilled a radioactive isotope, phosphorous-32, often used in water quality tests, onto his or her shoes while working in a lab on the first floor of the annex. The researcher left the lab, tracking the material into parts of the building and outside.

Basi said he didn't know who the researcher was or when the spilled material was discovered on the shoes, but knew the researcher immediately called the MU Environmental Health and Safety Department when the problem surfaced.

"The EHS acted very quickly," Basi said. "They cordoned off the area and made sure there were no risks to anyone's health."

The area where decontamination work is being done is cordoned off and the public is being barred from certain parts of the annex building until the cleaning is done.

"Six labs are now under restricted access, but no classes were affected," Basi said. "We didn't have to cancel or postpone any classes."

Kit Wagar, spokesman for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, said the state doesn't consider the spill to be a major concern.

"Yes, this is radioactive, but it's very low-risk," Wagar said. "This is considered more of a nuisance than a hazard."

Minimal protective gear is needed for the members of the MU Environmental Health and Safety Department responsible for the decontamination work.

"People don't even need a haz-mat suit in the area," Wagar said. "Just your clothing is enough to protect from this type of radioactive material."

Basi said he's unsure how long the clean up process will take but it involves a variety of methods.

"There are different ways to do this decontamination work," Basi said. "In some cases they can just wash something down, but sometimes they just remove things, such as carpet."

The MU Department of Environmental Health and Safety will launch an investigation into the incident as soon as decontamination work is completed.

"They're still working on cleaning the area so we're devoting all possible resources on that right now,"
Basi said. "We'll determine any new procedures, if any, that need to be put in place."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Nontenured-track faculty may soon be included in MU campus committees

By Ben Wieder

November 6, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Nearly one-third of MU's ranked faculty is not allowed to serve on campus standing committees that help shape university policy.

The Faculty Affairs Committee of the MU Faculty Council is trying to change that. At a council meeting Thursday, Clyde Bentley, an associate professor in the School of Journalism and member of the committee, introduced a proposed change that would allow the roughly 600 ranked, nontenure-track faculty members to serve on the 31 campus committees.

"Many of our best and brightest long-term faculty are in this category," Bentley said.

Nontenure-track faculty members are primarily responsible for one area from teaching, research, clinical/professional practice or Extension activities. Tenured and tenure-track faculty members are responsible for any combination of those areas. Nontenure-track, tenure-track and tenured faculty can all be ranked faculty, which includes assistant, associate and full professors.

Victoria Johnson, an associate professor of sociology and co-vice president of the MU chapter of the American Association of University Professors, said the number of nontenure-track faculty members is increasing at institutions across the country and allowing these faculty members to serve on campus committees will help ensure that their needs are met.

"It's basic democratic principles," Johnson said. "They're part of the academic community, and they should be treated as such."

The council changed its rules of order in 2006 to allow up to four nontenure-track faculty members to serve in a nonvoting capacity.

But the council currently includes only one such member, chairwoman Leona Rubin said.

"(Nontenure-track faculty) don't have a mechanism to unite and elect someone to serve," she said.

News of the 2006 change didn't necessarily reach nontenure-track faculty, said Stephen Montgomery-Smith, a mathematics professor and co-vice-president of MU's AAUP.

"Nontenure-track faculty that I've spoken with are not even aware that they should be doing this," Montgomery-Smith said.

Harry Tryer, an engineering professor, expressed concern that nontenure-track faculty members could be pressed into service against their will and that they wouldn't be as independent as tenured faculty.

Rubin said she introduced the idea of expanding access to the campus committees in September because the exclusion of ranked nontenure-track faculty "seems grossly unfair."

She said ranked nontenure-track faculty members are "huge contributors to governance" at the College of Veterinary Medicine, where she is an associate professor of biomedical sciences.

"They're as permanent as I am, and therefore as valuable," Rubin said.

The committee discussed the possibility of further specifying that only benefit-eligible ranked nontenure-track faculty be included in the new designation. The council is expected to vote on the proposed change Nov. 19.

The committee also discussed:

- Expanded e-learning across the University of Missouri System and intellectual property rights for course materials in a presentation given by Steven Graham,

UM vice president for Academic Affairs, and Zac March, UM director of Distance Education and E-Learning;

- MU's potential participation in a new English-intensive university in South Korea that features several programs taught and run by various American institutions that grant degrees from the home institution to students in South Korea'
- A reclassification of nontenured UM Extension faculty as either full, associate or assistant Extension professionals; and,
- The need to select a new faculty athletics representative.

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Old water leak requires some tooth-chattering drilling at Journalism School's famous archway

By Kelsey Miranda

November 5, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA – Chatter hushes as superstitious students pass under the Missouri School of Journalism archway; one of the most prevalent myths is that students who talk during the dozen or so steps it takes to walk through it will flunk their next test.

But the stone walkway linking the northeast end of Francis Quadrangle to the intersection of Ninth and Elm streets will be a loud echo chamber for a week as repairs are made. Starting Wednesday, jackhammers were used to drill into the base on the Ninth Street side to get at a water leak that's been seeping into an underground classroom for years.

"We're hoping to reopen the archway on Tuesday, Nov. 10," said Pat Cloyd, administrative assistant in the journalism dean's office. "And we're hoping they can do that — that there won't be any unforeseen problems."

The archway is one of those places on campus that is often used for photographs and postcards.

Completed in 1937, it is between Walter Williams and Neff halls. Above it on the Ninth Street side are the words "Wise shall be the bearers of light." Inside it, a plaque states, "On this campus the world's first school of journalism was founded by Walter Williams Sept. 1, 1908."

"It's a traditionally sacred location within the journalism school," said Libbi Gordon, president of the MU chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. "I never talk while walking under it because of the superstition."

According to myth, two students once boasted about cheating on an exam while passing under the archway. A professor in an office above the archway overheard them – and failed them.

"It's a neat tradition that I think most journalism students recognize, a fun thing that we share," said Cassandra Batchelder, a junior in strategic communications, which is part of the Journalism School.

The archway's stone lions, particularly well-remembered by alums, were carved in Chufu, the birthplace of Confucius, during China's Ming Dynasty, and once stood guard at a Confucian temple in Nanjing, China. They are more than 500 years old.

The lions were dedicated to the Journalism School in 1931 by Chao-Chu-Wu, Chinese minister to the U.S., and presented during the school's 22nd annual Journalism Week festivities.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

11.05.2009 12:13 pm

Former Post-Dispatch managing editor, Pam Maples, becomes VP of editorial at Newsy.com

By Deb Peterson
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

NEWS FROM NEWSY.COM: Pam Maples, former managing editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, **has been hired as the vice president of editorial at Newsy.com**, an online and mobile video news source based in Columbia, Mo., and **affiliated with the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism**, **Jim Spencer**, president of Newsy.com, said today.

"Pam is in charge of all editorial content and presentation at Newsy.com," Spencer said in an interview. "She oversees the team that writes, produces and edits the content on our website."

Spencer described Newsy.com as a news analyzer, not a news aggregator, which means it analyzes the key differences in how a story is being reported by various news organizations. It produces daily videos that describe these differences. Spencer said the "team" Maples will oversee includes three full-time workers, an editorial adviser, 10 part-time workers and students.

As part of an arrangement between Newsy.com and the Missouri journalism school, Maples also will teach a class on advanced global news, Spencer said. Students who take the class are guaranteed two work shifts a week at the news website, he added.

Maples, 51, will continue to live in Glendale with her husband and twin sons and will commute between St. Louis and Columbia.

Maples was managing editor of the Post-Dispatch for nearly three years until she resigned in August. She said at the time in a note to the staff: "Sometimes, it's just time to do something new. I'm not sure what's next, but I'm eager to explore some new ideas and avenues and it's likely those will involve journalism in some form."

Post-Dispatch Editor **Arnie Robbins** said at the time that he reluctantly accepted her resignation, and that she had elevated the level of journalism at the newspaper and its online site, STLtoday.com. He also noted that Maples had played a pivotal role in overseeing coverage surrounding the City Hall shootings in Kirkwood, which finished as a finalist in the 2009 Pulitzer Prize Breaking News Reporting category.

Prior to coming to the Post-Dispatch, Maples was assistant managing editor of investigations at The Dallas Morning News where she was a member of the reporting team that was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting. She is a graduate of the Missouri journalism school.

Spencer is a Kansas City native who has his master's degree from the Missouri School of Journalism. He was VP of Content and Answers at Ask Jeeves (Ask.com) before starting Newsy.com. His professional background also includes having been the general manager of News and Information Programming at AOL, and director of strategic partnerships at NBC for MSNBC.com.

Along with the announcement about Maples, Spencer said Newsy.com has hired **Jim Flink**, a weekend news anchor and reporter at KMBC-TV, Kansas City's ABC affiliate, as editorial advisor to the site. Flink has been awarded a regional Emmy for spot news coverage and the newscast that he anchored won the National Edward R. Murrow Award. He, too, has his master's degree from the University of Missouri j-school.

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Faculty Council discusses adding more online classes

The council also covered representing non-tenure faculty.

By Rachel Allred
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Faculty Council discussed including non-tenure faculty in council affairs, broadening e-learning programs and assisting a South Korean university during its meeting Thursday.

Academic Affairs Vice President Steven Graham said more online courses would broaden the university's reach and are something the university should consider adopting.

"When I'm talking about e-learning I'm thinking of mostly trying to get courses that might be offered mostly or exclusively online that would increase access for students both in terms of distance or convenience," Graham said.

Graham said a report from a few years ago stated 4 or 5 million students were taking online courses. A report that came out this week stated there are as many as 12 million students taking classes online and that growth could be attributed to advances in technology, he said.

"Younger students really grew up on this stuff," Graham said. "They prefer to communicate on this medium."

Graham said engineering and science courses might be added in the future to make the university more competitive. Professors who create online courses would be able to create copyrights on their work as well.

The main focus now, Graham said, is to gain more support and teach faculty members.

"What we've focused most of our efforts on has been to try to build faculty development activities, put instructional designers on campus, basically provide faculty with the kind of support they would need," Graham said.

Chairwoman Leona Rubin presented a proposal from MU Extension to provide ranking and representation of non-tenure faculty. Rubin said MU Extension would like to give titles to these faculty members.

"It will add 260 non-tenure track faculty to the list," Rubin said. "Currently we have a little over 600 non-tenure track ranked faculty, which means they have titles in the system."

Council member Clyde Bentley said the council needs to find ways to represent more people.

"At the University of Missouri we have 6,561 employees who are in the teaching and research category," Bentley said. "This faculty council represents 1,244 of those."

Bentley said collected rules for the council provide for the inclusion of non-tenure track.

"We don't have something to actually put people on the council, but the wording here would allow non-tenure track faculty to be eligible for appointment," Bentley said.

Non-tenure faculty could join various committees on campus, Bentley said. Council member Victoria Johnson said this would be positive for the university because faculty members could learn from each other.

"It seems whether faculty or part-time or full-time, if they're consistently working here and they do research, they do teaching, they need to network with us," Johnson said.

Other council members, such as council member Harry Tyrer, said they have some apprehensions.

"I'm really concerned about getting somebody who is teaching one course and that's all they do and then someone imposes some committee work on them, and they don't feel they can turn it down," Tyrer said.

The council also discussed a possible partnership between MU and South Korea.

The country's government has offered MU \$1 million to provide advice and support for a South Korean university that will provide English intensive classes.

"They are negotiating with a contortion of schools, which includes MU, to put a unique type of campus on Korean soil," Rubin said. "They're giving the University of Missouri a million dollars to develop a business plan and potential curriculum."

If MU decides to proceed and South Korea approves MU's proposed curriculum, Rubin said South Korea would pay MU several million dollars in exchange for its support.

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Les Bourgeois Vineyards undergoes investigations

The three September incidents involved two sexual assaults.

By Eric Rees

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The incidents at Les Bourgeois Vineyards in early September that caused the vineyard to cancel 15 scheduled events have progressed in their investigations, Missouri State Highway Patrol Sgt. Chris Harris said. All three incidents involved MU students.

Two sexual assaults reported within a week of each other, the first Sept. 13 and the second Sept. 18, are still under investigation by the Boone County Sheriff's Department.

"One of the cases was submitted to the prosecutor's office who then requested more investigation," Sheriff's Department Major Tom Reddin said.

The other case sent evidence to the Missouri State Highway Patrol Crime Laboratory Division for analysis, Reddin said. The lab gets evidence from all over the state and has to organize and prioritize the importance of each case.

"It could be several months before they get the evidence back," Reddin said.

The third accident involved senior Brian Lindsey being backed over by a bus leaving the winery after a party. After an investigation by the Highway Patrol, the driver has been cleared of all liabilities in the accident, Harris said.

"We found that the bus driver could not be held liable in this incident," Harris said. "There was no information whatsoever to lead me to believe that he was negligent that night."

Harris was the officer who responded to the bus incident on the night of Sept. 17.

Harris also said the area where the members of the party were waiting wasn't an ideal place to be that night. The investigation showed there was one Les Bourgeois employee directing buses and people before the incident.

"He was just overwhelmed," Harris said.

Harris said the largest contributing circumstances to the incident that night were intoxication, a large crowd and the location where it happened.

According to a statement released shortly after the bus incident, Les Bourgeois was deeply troubled by the alleged incidents and very concerned for the safety of the patrons. The winery has been in full cooperation with the authorities during the investigation, Reddin said.

"We did turn up some liquor law violations that were happening that night," Harris said in reference to the night of the bus accident. "That night would have been the time to make those cases but I was busy trying

to get the information for the accident report. Everything as far as our department is concerned is closed on the case."

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Tour groups inconvenience Defoe-Graham residents

Some students are asking for changes to the way tours are conducted.

By Luke Udstuen
Published Nov. 6, 2009

(View large image browser)

The influx of campus visitors brought on by Black and Gold Days and Meet Mizzou irks some residents of the Defoe-Graham residence hall.

"I can understand how they want to showcase the newer dorms because they're in better quality, and better condition," sophomore Defoe-Graham resident Liz Hartnett said. "But honestly, I was woken up by one today, and I didn't appreciate it at all."

Hartnett said though the problem has only been intolerable on Black and Gold Days, she has had many embarrassing incidents.

"There were times where I'll be in the bathroom showering, and there'll be a giant tour group in front of the bathroom that I have to walk through in a towel," Hartnett said. "It's awkward for both me and the tour groups. That's happened multiple times."

Both Hartnett and sophomore Defoe-Graham resident Peter Jones said they understood the importance of including residence halls in a tour of campus.

"I have no problem with the tour groups wanting to see our dorm," Jones said. "However, the way in which they're organized is fairly inconvenient."

The tour groups enter through the main entrance of Defoe-Graham, tour the lobby and see two designated showrooms. One room is suite style; the other is community living style, with separate bedrooms but shared living space and bathrooms.

Jones said the organization of the tour groups could be better.

"They tend to congregate in the lobby area," Jones said. "The tour guides move them in, and make them stop. So, it's a solid mass of people between the elevator and the door. So you can't get to your mailbox."

The central location and recent renovation contributed to selection of Defoe-Graham residence hall as the only hall showcased, MU tour guide Theo Keith said.

Residential Life Director Frankie Minor said, "We appreciate the residents' patience with us."

Minor said Residential Life is overseeing the tours as a pilot program that will be evaluated at the end of the year for effectiveness. The program will also adapt as the year progresses, he said.

The community living and suite-style rooms are both located in Defoe-Graham residence hall this year, as opposed to last year when they were in two different buildings.

Minor said tour guides keep residents in mind when touring the residence hall.

"We're trying to do our best," Minor said. "We let the tour groups know that the building is not offline, we've only got one or two rooms that are offline to show them, and that these are real live residents, and to please be considerate."

Minor said the program is still new and needs to run for a year to observe results. He also mentioned the possibility of using Hawthorn residence hall for tours as well but didn't want tours to affect more residents than necessary.

"We recognize that there is a small level of inconvenience, and our commitment is to make that as small as possible for the residents," Minor said.

The next Meet Mizzou Day is set for Nov. 14.

Both Jones and Hartnett said smaller tour group sizes would be beneficial.

"Ultimately, tour groups are the only way to show people a dorm," Jones said. "They just need to learn to manage them better."

Jones acknowledged the legitimacy of the tour groups but did not hide his frustration.

"I shouldn't have to fight past 40 people on my way out the door, who are very poorly arranged," Jones said. "I think that if they're going to put them here, they need to get their shit together, for lack of a better term."