

3-13-2017

## Current, March 13, 2017

University of Missouri-St. Louis

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### UM System Faces Scathing Criticism From Missouri State Auditor Nicole Galloway

KAT RIDDLE  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MISSOURI STATE Auditor Nicole Galloway released Monday the findings on the audit that her office began in February of last year on the University of Missouri System. Her report found “inappropriate bonus payments to top executives, including incentive payments, luxury vehicle allowances, and other compensation not included in published salaries.” In addition, she found that former University of Missouri–Columbia Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin continued to receive his 6-figure salary after resigning from his position in November 2015.

“Administrators appear to have forgotten that the system is a public institution and that they are accountable to taxpayers, students, and families,” Galloway said.

According to the report, Galloway uncovered \$2.3 million in hidden payments and incentives to top administrators, including \$1.2 million in incentives awarded to 18 executives and administrators over the past three years.

While the UM System can use incentives according to Board of Curators’ (BOC) Collected Rules and Regulations 20.130 and the budget approved by the BOC, there was a lack of transparency in how the compensation was earned, making



COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF MISSOURI STATE AUDITOR



KAT RIDDLE / THE CURRENT

State Auditor Nicole Galloway released a UM System audit last Monday. At right, UM System President Mun Choi tells the press that the executive bonus program will be eliminated immediately.

the incentives appear as year-end bonuses. The BOC or system president approved \$819,000 in incentive payments for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2014 and 2015. This is with an additional \$359,000 in incentives in fiscal year 2017, which ended June 30, 2016.

Excessive vehicle allowances and retention bonuses, relocation payments, and housing allowances were also criticized in the audit. According to the report, “Approximately \$407,000 in vehicle allowance payments were made to 18 top executives and administrators in 2015 and 2016. Many administrators received more than \$1,200 per month in vehicle allowance pay.” More than \$800,000 was discovered

in undisclosed retention bonuses, relocation payments, and housing allowances.

“These hidden sources of additional compensation amount to bonus pay because there were no clear guidelines or performance metrics,” Galloway said. “These payments must be included in compensation figures released to taxpayers so they know how their money is being spent.”

UM System President Mun Choi took office March 1, days before the audit release. The following Friday, Choi announced that the executive performance incentive program would be eliminated. Choi said in his first available press conference, “As the state’s premier public uni-

versity, we owe it to the state’s taxpayers and our stakeholders to be transparent with respect to what we are trying to accomplish as we move the university forward.” President Choi continued, “To that end, I will explore options for making our executive performance practices more effective, with any changes fully vetted with the Board of Curators.”

Choi also announced a comprehensive review of all elements of compensation for UM System executives. The review will be in conjunction with the UM System vice president for human resources and will begin immediately.

Chancellor Loftin resigned from his position in November 2015. The

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### UMSL Digital Marketing Conference Rises Again

KAT RIDDLE  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE UNIVERSITY of Missouri–St. Louis’ Midwest Digital Marketing Conference (MDMC) outgrew its one-day conference last year with 1,360 people in attendance and 300 more wait-listed. This year, the event, sponsored by the College of Business, will be held downtown at Union Station on April 12 and 13.

The MDMC was founded in 2013 by Perry Drake, director of business collaboration in marketing, and has grown in attendance and complexity since. Drake said, “This year we are going to two days and adding new tracks and more sessions. This year we have nine tracks. Some of the new tracks are on creativity and e-commerce. We have also added a new career, networking, and professional development fair for the general public free of charge. We will feature seven sessions on career development.”

The new Career and Professional Development Fair is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 12. Attendees will be able to meet with a variety of participating companies. The fair is sponsored by 314 Digital and Social Media Club–St. Louis.

Over 90 speakers are scheduled during the event from companies that include BuzzFeed, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and more. Speaker topics include engaging millennials and generation z, the future of marketing, and cybersecurity. The full list of speaker bios and their topics can be found on the conference website. The exhibitor hall will be open both days for attendees to walk around and learn about the different businesses showcased at the conference.

Drake said, “Small to large business enterprises will find something at this conference as well as those in the B2B or B2C space. We carefully planned the agendas accordingly. There are also sessions for all levels from beginners to advanced. All attendees are guaranteed to hear the latest practices and innovations around digital and social media marketing and communications. Attendees will learn the way industry leaders such as Facebook, Buzz-

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### University Program Board Sets Up Escape Room to Keep Students Engaged on Campus

LEAH JONES  
FEATURES EDITOR

ESCAPE THE Room PC games took off in the 1990s. More recently, the games have been extracted into offline spaces, and real-world escape the room experiences have appeared all over the country, including in St. Louis. Now, the escape the room experience has come to the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

The University Program Board (UPB) held an escape room to challenge UMSL students to use their critical thinking skills and build teamwork on March 7 at 4 p.m. in the Century Rooms of the Millennium Student Center. Kaitlin Henning, senior, psychology, serves as

the executive chair of the UPB. She said that first and foremost, she hoped that the students would have fun while completing the event, but that there are a lot of teamwork exercises that students complete while escaping from the room. The event also encouraged students to stay on campus after class time.

“We picked the time because it’s before night classes but kind of as afternoon classes are wrapping up. So, [it] keeps [students] engaged on campus, doing something that they can connect back to UMSL, back to UPB, and then also getting that teamwork component too,” Henning said.

Samantha Sansom, sophomore, business, and Shanna Cistrump, sophomore, psychology, came with

a group from their sorority, Alpha Xi Delta.

Cistrump expressed her excitement before she and her sisters went into the room. “I can’t wait. It looks like a lot of fun. I’m pretty happy that our sister Madison invited us up here. Otherwise, I would probably be sitting at home and not doing anything. So it’s pretty fantastic,” she said. “We are going to be locked in a room, and we are going to try to work together to get out of it.”

Sansom explained, “As a sisterhood, we have to work together, and this is a great example of working on teamwork. ... We have to work as a team to solve puzzles and clues ... to get out of the room. It is building on leadership.”

Cistrump spoke about how all of

the skills that they group hoped to hone in the escape room connected back to Alpha Xi Delta. “We do bonding, leadership—basically [Alpha Xi Delta] is just there to help us realize our potential in our next expedition in life,” she said.

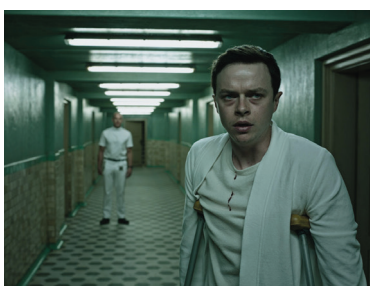
While the Alpha Xi Delta sisters built on existing friendships and relationships, Henning said that the event also helped people forge new connections as well. “Our first group that just finished were mostly strangers, I think. A couple of them were friends, but they all just showed up at the same time and ended up going and being a team together,” she said. “[So, they were] building teamwork, building friendship, and just having fun here

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**ON THE QUAD** BY MIKE DILIBERTO

**WEDNESDAY**  
**MARCH 15**  
**3:00PM**

**SELF CARE ISN'T SELFISH**

Join University Program Board and Panhellenic Council for massages, manicures, DIYs and more in the **MSC FIRESIDE LOUNGE & CENTURY ROOMS**

# Math Problem of the Week

There were no correct guesses last week.

This week's puzzle: A standard deck of 52 cards consists of 13 ranks (2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace) each from four suits (Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades). A five-card poker hand consists of five cards from a standard deck. How many five-card hands contain a three-of-a-kind? (A three-of-a-kind consists of three cards of the same rank, with the remaining two cards each of different ranks.)

Email solutions to [covertdj@umsl.edu](mailto:covertdj@umsl.edu).

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## Office of Student Involvement Column

**E**ACH WEEK, Office of Student Involvement (OSI) will provide info here about upcoming programs and events, as well as important announcements for involved students. This week in the Office of Student Involvement:

Join the UMSL Panhellenic Association, partnered with the University Program Board as they host Self Care Isn't Selfish. The event will include spa DIYs speakers on mental and physical health. Come out and de-stress before or after

midterms by learning a few ways to take care of yourself! The event will be located in the Fireside Lounge and Century Rooms A & B on March 15 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The annual Leadership Awards Banquet will be held on April 24. We are now accepting nominations for individual and organization awards, including Student Leader of the Year and Best Cultural Awareness Program. Nominations can be submitted by viewing the Leadership Awards Banquet event in Triton-

Sync. All nominees and nominators will be invited to the Leadership Awards Banquet, where the winners will be announced. Nominations are due by 5 p.m. on March 24.

The University Program Board presents the Mirth Week Comedy Show, featuring Trevor Noah and special guest Hasan Minhaj. Tickets are available through the Touhill Ticket Office, 314-516-4949 or [touhill.org](http://touhill.org). Student tickets are available for \$15. General public tickets may be purchased starting March

13, for \$35. Get your tickets today!

Join Solid Lines Productions for the UMSL Voices writing workshop on March 19 at 8 p.m. in Millennium Student Center, Century Room A. At this workshop, students will write about their experiences and interactions with mental health. We hope to see you there!

The Office of Student Involvement can be contacted at 314-516-5291 or [studentinvolvement@umsl.edu](mailto:studentinvolvement@umsl.edu).



# HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

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# CAMPUS CRIME REPORT

LORI DRESNER  
NEWS EDITOR

THE FOLLOWING is a series of daily crime and incident reports issued by the University of Missouri–St. Louis Police Department between March 1 and March 8.

**March 1:** At 10:55 a.m. two vehicles were involved in an auto accident in the West Drive Garage. There was minor damage and no injuries. At 12:30 p.m. a set of keys found in the Social Sciences and Business Building (SSB) was turned in to UMSL PD and held for safekeeping; the owner was notified.

**March 2:** At 3:15 p.m. UMSL PD took an informational report from a student who reported that a fraudulent job opening had been posted on a career service website. At 10:37 p.m. a key and a garage door opener were found by UMSL PD at the Patient Care Center and held for safekeeping.

**March 3:** At 9:12 p.m. two vehicles were involved in an auto accident in the West Drive Garage. There was minor damage and no injuries. At 1:36 p.m. UMSL PD discovered a deceased student at Mansion Hill Apartments; the incident was a sudden death, and no foul play was involved. At 5:06 p.m. a cell phone that was reported missing by an UMSL student was found by UMSL PD at the J.C. Penney Conference Center; the item was held for safekeeping.

**March 4:** At 3:25 a.m. UMSL PD

responded to a peace disturbance call regarding a dispute between roommates at University Meadows. At 12:48 p.m. an UMSL student reported that a fraudulent banking transaction had occurred after the student accepted an illegitimate online job. At 4:30 p.m. UMSL PD was called in to assist the Bel-Ridge Police Department regarding property damage to concrete Greek letters at the Sigma Tau Gamma house. At 5:15 p.m. UMSL PD took an informational report regarding accidental damage to the front door of the Sigma Pi house. At 6:50 p.m. an UMSL student reported that a license plate had been stolen from their car in Lot E. At 11:15 p.m. UMSL PD responded to a peace disturbance call regarding a loud party at University Meadows; the party disbanded without incident.

**March 5 to March 6:** No incidents were reported on these dates.

**March 7:** At 11:43 p.m. UMSL PD was called in to assist the St. Louis County Police Department with a distraught passenger on the UMSL North Metrolink platform.

**March 8:** At 8:30 a.m. a non-UMSL student who was handing out music CDs in the Millennium Student Center was escorted off campus. At 8:39 p.m. a laptop found in SSB was turned in to UMSL PD and held for safekeeping.

## UM System Audit Report Released

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
audit showed that he continued to receive his salary of \$459,000 for six months after his resignation, when he was performing no duties of the position.

In June 2016, after he stopped receiving his salary as chancellor, Chancellor Hank Foley approved Loftin for the newly created position of the director of national security research development. This new position came with a salary of \$344,000. This amount was higher than Loftin's supervisors and was 31 percent more than the highest paid research administrator on campus.

The contract for the position also had a \$100,000 retention bonus, a \$15,600 per year luxury vehicle allowance, and a \$35,000 annual stipend with no restrictions on use. Loftin was given "developmental leave" to continue traveling the remainder of the year with no clear objectives or deliverables for the position while using his salary and \$50,000 travel budget.

"These decisions demonstrate poor judgment and a lack of accountability in almost every aspect of the former chancellor's resignation and transition to a new position," Galloway said. "System leaders must be called on to explain how it makes sense to pay almost half a million dollars over the course of a year to an employee who was responsible for completing no actual

work on behalf of the university or its students."

President Choi's initial statement about the audit focused on transparency and the future. "The UM System strives to be more accountable and transparent in its stewardship of public resources," President Choi said. "We will use the audit report to continue improving our business processes and our operations."

Governor Eric Greitens' Board of Curators nominees Darryl Chatman, Jamie Farmer, and Jeff Layman were questioned by the the Senate Gubernatorial Appointments Committee about the audit findings. Chatman brought up the fact that the BOC might not know the competitive figures for the incentives and compensation programs to the extent that individual universities do. St. Louis Attorney Chatman said, "We do know something is broken, though, on a lot of levels."

President Choi initially released in his official statement an explanation of some of the incentives. "Our executive compensation program is critical to our capacity to attract and retain top leaders in what is an extremely competitive national higher education market," Choi said. "Consistent with the audit report's recommendation, the UM System will continue to establish objective executive performance goals."



Bustling exhibitor hall at last year's MDMC.

## Digital Marketing Conference Returns Bigger Than Ever

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
Feed, Twitter, and GoDaddy engage internally and externally."

There will also be an Executive Round Table discussion for individuals with director-level job titles or above with an additional ticket price of \$49. This 50-seat limited discussion will be moderated by Forrester Research and will include other executives from Return Path, Yahoo!, Oracle, Microsoft, and more for one hour with another hour open to

questions from the audience.

Changes were also made to the startup competition this year. Startup companies applied and went through a Skype interview process prior to the conference. Five startups were then chosen to receive two conference passes, free parking for the weekend, four food truck vouchers for both days, a free display booth, discounted hotel accommodations, and access to select speakers from Facebook, Google,

Pinterest, and others. At the conference, the selected companies will have the opportunity to pitch their startup to a target market and 10 panelist judges from 10 companies, including from Google, Facebook, and Microsoft for a chance to win \$5,000 cash sponsored by Purina and UMSL Accelerate.

The State of Digital Media Marketing Conference was founded by

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## Graduate School Hosts Open Forum to Hear Student Concerns

LORI DRESNER  
NEWS EDITOR

THE GRADUATE school at the University of Missouri–St. Louis hosted an open forum to hear graduate students' concerns about issues on campus on March 10, in room 202 of the J.C. Penney Building.

Topics discussed at the forum included parking, the concerted effort to adopt a five-day schedule, and the possibility of course sharing across campuses.

Wesley Harris, interim provost for graduate studies and research and professor in the department of chemistry, moderated the forum.

Harris explained that the open forums began last fall as an outlet for graduate students to express concerns about issues on campus.

"I had gone into that [first] meeting sort of expecting some kind of student council kind of structure for grad students," explained Harris. "And that meeting was pretty well represented. The consensus was that they didn't really want to elect representatives or have councils; they just wanted to continue to have open meetings ... so now every month, we designate a Friday and schedule a room, and the invitation

goes out to all the graduate students, so whoever wants to come and talk can come."

A few students showed up to the open forum on Friday to express concerns relative to their respective departments as well as general issues on campus. A graduate student in the biology department voiced a concern that his department is lacking a professor to teach an upper level statistics course, though it is a required course.

Harris said that the solution to lack of availability for certain courses could come down to course sharing across the four UM campuses if the courses needed are offered online. He noted that the first step, however, would be to try to find an instructor on campus who has the expertise to teach such a course.

"When students tried to take courses on another campus, historically there's been administrative hurdles and roadblocks. But there's much more of an atmosphere these days that we've got to get past all that. I think that they're anticipating that there's going to be a lot more of that [course sharing] going on as budgets on all the campuses are shrinking," he explained.

Another graduate student

brought up the issue of limited parking on campus. Harris said that the possibility of adopting a five-day campus has been one solution proposed to reduce those constraints.

"[A] solution is to try to spread the classes out so that not everyone is trying to be here at the same time to take courses," said Harris. "The other perceived advantage of that is when you get into your upper division courses when there aren't that many scheduling options ... students can run into conflicts where they need two courses, but they're being taught at the same time. Spreading them out over the day is thought to alleviate that kind of problem."

Harris said that about 100 students showed up to the first meeting, though recent meetings have been more sparse.

According to the graduate school homepage, graduate students compose nearly 22 percent of UMSL's student body and study in 30 master's programs, 14 doctoral programs, and two education specialist programs, and work toward various graduate certificates.

The next open forum will be held on April 14 at 3 p.m. in J.C. Penney Room 202 and is open to all graduate students.





Freshman Emma Thorngren takes runner up in the Las Vegas Classic on March 5.

## Triton Sports Recap, March 5-10

LANCE JORDAN  
SPORTS EDITOR

ON MARCH 5 the University of Missouri–St. Louis men's golf team held a tie for sixth place in an 18-team field as part of the Las Vegas Desert Classic.

The women's golf team also played the Las Vegas Desert Classic on March 5, accumulating a score of 318. The team led the scoreboard with Lee University and Regis University following in second and third respectively. Emma Thorngren, freshman, business, was the individual leader after day one with 75. The women's golf team kept the momentum going into day two of the tournament. The Tritons turned in a 611, just two strokes behind the tournament winners. Thorngren would be the runner-up of the event, while Maxi Roth, sophomore, international business, came in third place.

The men's golf team returned to the course March 6 and turned in a team score of 567. This was the second best 36-hole score in the program's history. The team would secure fourth place as the West Florida men's team were the victors of the tournament, just 19 strokes ahead of UMSL.

Also on March 6, The UMSL baseball team faced Ohio Valley in the Jack Russell Stadium in Clearwater, Fla., as part of the Clearwater Invitational. In the first match of the Invitational, the Tritons came up short by just one hit after a closely contested matchup. The Tritons scored three runs at the top of the ninth to bring the matchup to a tie of 11-11. The game would go into a 10th inning, where the matchup was decided by Ohio Valley. It was the

work of Nick Ulrey, senior, criminal justice, and Tanner Hudson, senior, biochemistry, who brought the game to a tie, keeping UMSL alive in the matchup a bit longer.

On March 7, the baseball team faced off against Cedarville, their second matchup in the Clearwater Invitational. The Tritons were able to score three unanswered runs through the sixth and eighth innings to win 7-5. The win was big for the team as it was the first win of their 2017 season.

March 7 also saw the softball team face two opponents, securing victories against them both. First up was against Walsh University, whom the Tritons beat 5-1. The first inning saw UMSL score two runs, one from Serena Olson, sophomore, accounting, with a home run and the second from Alex Stupek, senior, nursing, after Erin Walker, senior, elementary special education, hit an RBI double to allow Stupek to score.

Ryan Logan, senior, business, kept the momentum going with an RBI double to make the game 3-0. Sara Kern, senior, business marketing, would secure the team their final two runs of the matchup during the third and fifth innings.

In the matchup with Grand Valley State, UMSL was able to secure a 2-0 win after Stupek made it home after Kern's RBI double in the second inning. Finally, Annie Kroeger, freshman, pre-dental, would come across the plate in the fifth inning after an RBI groundout from Reagan Osborn, sophomore, nursing.

On March 8, the women's tennis team took all nine matches in UMSL's home court, defeating Lindenwood University and extending their record to 4-0.

Also on this day, the softball team won another two matchups. First up the team faced off against Mercyhurst. It was the 6-run fourth inning by the Tritons that helped them pull away to an eventual 10-3 win. In game two of the day, an RBI double in the fourth and an RBI single in the fifth allowed UMSL to defeat Minnesota Duluth, 2-0.

The baseball team secured another win on March 8. The team was able to pull off a 17-6 victory against Oakland City due in large part to four RBIs from Derrick Freeman, freshman, supply chain management.

March 9 saw the baseball team's two-game winning streak come to an end while up against Minnesota Crookston. The team attempted to rally back from a 6-0 lead from Minnesota at the bottom of the eighth. They came up just shy of two runs that would have allowed them to secure the victory. UMSL fell 6-5 to Minnesota Crookston.

On March 10, the baseball team looked to get back to their winning ways against Ohio Valley in a rematch from the March 6 game. The Tritons would score 17 runs to lead them to a 17-10 victory. The Tritons led the game after the first two innings. Ohio Valley attempted a comeback in fourth inning, but UMSL was quick to recover with three runs on two hits. In the fifth and sixth inning, Ohio Valley would gain five unanswered runs, bringing them closer the lead. The Tritons would gain one run at the bottom of the sixth, bringing the game to a 10-8 Triton lead. UMSL would fire back though with seven straight runs in the seventh.

## ABC to Crown March Madness Champions

ASSOCIATED BLACK COLLEGIANS  
PRESENTS



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ABC\_1968 ASSOCIATED BLACK COLLEGIANS

TIME OF THE EVENT:  
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

DESIGNED BY JAYBLENG

ABC hosts the March Madness 5-on-5 tournament this Thursday, March 16.

LANCE JORDAN  
SPORTS EDITOR

ON MARCH 16 the Associated Black Collegians (ABC) will host a 5-on-5 March Madness-style basketball tournament at the Recreation and Wellness Center from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on courts one and two.

"I love playing basketball," said Brandi Fields, junior, nursing. "I used to play in high school. I stopped in my senior year just because I knew I was going to school for nursing and eventually knew I would have to stop at the collegiate level." Fields is the current president of ABC and spoke to *The Current* on why the organization chose to run this event for a second year.

"Basically out of my passion for basketball. I always look for an excuse to play. I don't really get to go up to the Rec too often because of my schedule, but this is one of the times that I do. And it worked last year, so we're continuing it," said Fields who joined the organization her freshman year in 2014.

"There was a list of organizations they had in the orientation packet, so I was going through the list highlighting the ones that sounded interesting to me, and this one stuck out," Fields said. "I also had a cousin who went here and told me about the organization. She was on the executive board one year. So I kind of saw it out for myself, went to a couple of events, and I was like,

yeah, I want to pay my dues."

Last year, Fields was elected as president after severing as their events coordinator.

The March Madness tournament will have basic basketball rules. There will be 10 minutes per game, depending on the number of teams entered. The highest scoring team will advance once the time has expired in the matchup. Ties are settled with a 30 second overtime play.

Last year, the tournament ran 3-on-3 teams instead of the 5-on-5 teams introduced this year.

"We had a lot of people come out [last year]. This year I decided to make it a 5-on-5 just because I felt like it would attract more people. So we'll see how this year goes," Fields said. "Next year, I'll probably suggest to the board a 3-on-3 part or a 5-on-5 part, and you can choose which one you want to do. Depending on how this one goes."

Registration is closed for the event, but that should not stop any student or community member from coming out and cheering on competing teams at no cost.

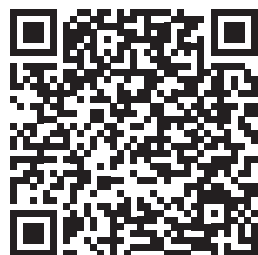
"It's just another event. You can come out and just get away from the everyday academic obligations that you have," Fields said.

For more information on the March Madness 5-on-5 Basketball Tournament and other events hosted by the Associated Black Collegians, visit [facebook.com/associatedblackcollegians/](https://facebook.com/associatedblackcollegians/)

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### Sports calendar

Monday, 3/6	All Day	Women's Golf	Las Vegas Classic	Away
Monday, 3/6	All Day	Men's Golf	Las Vegas Classic	Away
Monday, 3/6	2:00 PM	Baseball	vs Ohio Valley	Away
Tuesday, 3/7	10:00 AM	Baseball	vs Cedarville	Away
Tuesday, 3/7	10:30 AM	Softball	vs Walsh	Away
Tuesday, 3/7	1:00 PM	Softball	vs Grand Valley State	Away
Wednesday, 3/8	2:00 PM	Women's Tennis	vs Lindenwood	Home
Wednesday, 3/8	9:00 AM	Softball	vs Mercyhurst	Away
Wednesday, 3/8	10:00 AM	Baseball	vs Oakland City	Away
Wednesday, 3/8	11:30 AM	Softball	vs Minnesota-Duluth	Away
Thursday, 3/9	2:00 PM	Baseball	vs Minnesota-Crookston	Away
Friday, 3/10	2:00 PM	Baseball	vs Ohio Valley	Away
Saturday, 3/11	2:00 PM	Women's Tennis	vs Western Illinois	Home
Saturday, 3/11	2:00 PM	Baseball	vs Minnesota-Crookston	Away
Sunday, 3/12	1:00 PM	Men's Tennis	vs Southern Indiana	Away



# Beautiful Horror: Verbinski's 'A Cure for Wellness'

**MICHELLE REYNOLDS**  
STAFF WRITER  
**SEAN ROLWING**  
STAFF WRITER

**D**ARK AND beautifully twisted. I'm not talking about a dimly lit staircase, I'm talking about the latest movie: "A Cure for Wellness." Nevertheless, you'll feel yourself descending into a horrifying madness of its own creation as you watch layer after layer of this story unfold. From the director who brought you the 2002 movie "The Ring," Gore Verbinski now presents a bold new mystery that with every ticking minute sucks you deeper into the picturesque and haunting world he created. With a name like "Gore," you know the mystery has to be chilling.

Released on February 17, "A Cure for Wellness" follows Lockhart, a company man rising to the upper echelons of the business world, who is sent to retrieve his company's CEO from a mysterious "wellness center" nestled in a remote village of the Swiss Alps. As he arrives, he is greeted by golden, sunlit lawns and laughing, contented patients. However, Lockhart soon comes to suspect that the miraculous treatments are not what they may seem. While trying to unravel the center's terrifying secrets, Lockhart begins to believe that his own sanity may be at stake. Indeed, he soon finds himself diagnosed with the same curious illness trapping all of the patients within its walls. Oblivious to the evils of their new home, they all insist that they are sick and are in need of "The Cure," which only the center can provide.

Regardless of the darkness hid-



Dane DeHaan stars as Lockhart, a young executive sent to retrieve his company's CEO from a mysterious "wellness center."

den underneath, every scene of the movie is shockingly beautiful. Stunning. Marvelous. Astonishing. There are not enough words to describe the breathtaking scenery of this movie. Filmed in Germany, this movie is a treat for the eyes, with each scene feeling like it could be a screensaver.

It is a far cry from the visually disturbing images of your average slasher film. In fact, throughout the majority of the film, it is rare to find something openly terrifying. Instead, it is the ever-growing sense of unease hidden underneath the beauty of the images that causes the audience to feel so much dramatic tension. The feeling is similar to that horrible pain in your gut as you wait

in a dentist's office. It is this contrast between the two that makes each shot, whether it is of a Swiss sunset or a burning mansion, so unsettling. This builds ceaselessly, culminating in a dramatic ending reminiscent of classic horror movies from an earlier generation.

"A Cure for Wellness" is lengthy at 146 minutes, which feels every bit as long as it sounds. But although the plot is drawn out and paced a little slowly at times, its intensity keeps you drawn in, and its mystery only keeps growing. Small details are constantly dropped to the audience throughout, all building toward something greater, even if that something can be a little unclear at times.

"A Cure for Wellness" is complex in thought, almost a little too complex at times, leaving some scratching their heads. If asked to summarize this movie in one word, that word would be "confusion." Verbinski took what could have been a simple plot and somehow made it ridiculously complicated, leaving many questions unanswered. However, even though this gothic masterpiece is extremely complex, I feel the more times you watch it, the more you will pick up on clues you missed the first time.

Also, while many people enjoy this mystery movie, the last 20 minutes could make some viewers angry and uncomfortable, so please carefully read the rating for this movie.

"A Cure for Wellness" is rated R for disturbing violent content and images, and includes some sexual content involving assault, nudity, and language.

Despite its complexity and use of graphic images, the saving grace of this film was the intensity of the actors' performances. Dane DeHaan, who took the part of Lockhart, captivated the audience with the realism of his work. His emotional reactions always seemed authentic, unlike many actors of the horror genre. Another pleasant surprise was the performance of Jason Isaacs as the owner and director of the wellness center. Although his role wasn't shown in any of the film's extensive advertising, the amount of work that he put into the movie was self-evident: He stole away your attention every time he entered the frame. Even lesser-known actress Mia Goth competed for attention and successfully portrayed innocence amidst evil while simultaneously emanating an air of secrecy and eeriness.

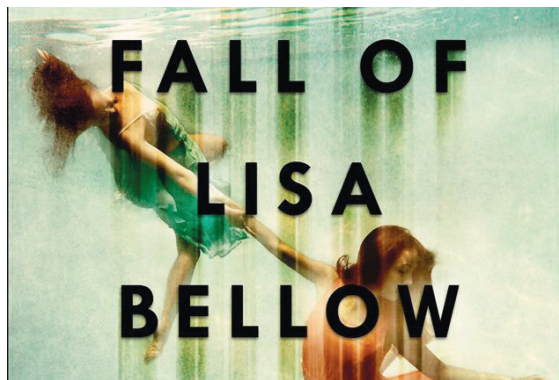
It is apparent that, following his recent flop, "The Lone Ranger," Verbinski attempted to reach back to his roots in the horror genre with this carefully crafted tale. Whether he accomplished this is difficult to determine. Receiving only a 40% on Rotten Tomatoes and a 6.6 out of 10 on IMDB, "A Cure for Wellness" is definitely far from "family-friendly" and will not be everybody's cup of tea. However, if you like beautifully disturbing plots with equally beautiful scenery, this movie is sure to please.

## ARTS CALENDAR



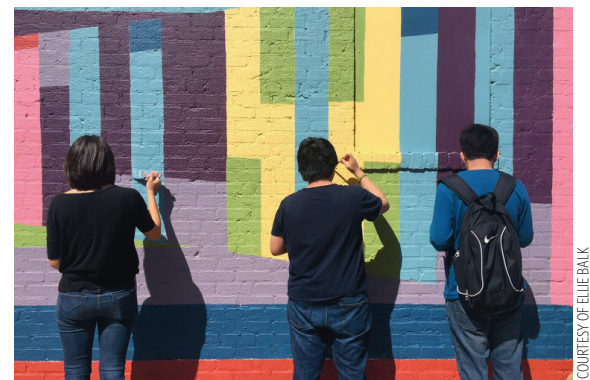
COURTESY OF THE TOUHILL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

From **March 16 through March 19**, UMSL Theatre & Cinema Arts will present the award winning musical "The Wiz" at the **Touhill Performing Arts Center**. Written by William F. Brown with music by Charlie Smalls, "The Wiz" reimagines Lyman Frank Baum's "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," filtering the classic children's tale through a modern, African American perspective. Musical numbers in "The Wiz" range in influence from soul to hip-hop to rock. The musical will take place in the Anheuser-Busch performance hall. The performances on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday begin at **7:30 p.m.** The performance on Sunday afternoon begins at **2:00 p.m.** General Admission tickets are \$20; student tickets are \$10.



SIMON & SCHUSTER

**Left Bank Books** will host a reading by Pushcart-winning author **Susan Perabo** on **March 16 at 7:00 p.m.** Perabo, who has previously published two collections of short stories ("Who I Was Supposed To Be" and "Why They Run The Way They Do"), will read from and discuss her new novel, "The Fall of Lisa Bellow." The following is taken from Simon & Schuster: "'The Fall of Lisa Bellow' is edgy and original, a hair-raising exploration of the ripple effects of an unthinkable crime. It is a dark, beautifully rendered, and gripping novel about coping, about coming-of-age, and about forgiveness." Perabo will sign copies of the book after the reading. This event is free and open to the public.



COURTESY OF ELLIE BALK

On **March 19**, muralist and art educator **Ellie Balk** will lead a **lecture and interactive art installation** at the **Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis**. The event is the latest offering in the museum's Take 5 adult education series. Balk was born in St. Louis but lived in Brooklyn for 12 years, until returning to St. Louis in 2015. Her art focuses on mathematics and complex systems. By incorporating readable data into her pieces, she invites viewers to "make sense" of her work by reading it in the same way that one might read a graph. Sunday Studio: Mural Art with Ellie Balk will take place from **1 p.m. to 3 p.m.** Tickets to the event are \$10.



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# Amelioration, Graduation, and Vacation: UMSL Mother and Daughter Donna and Ashlie Vickers

LEAH JONES  
FEATURES EDITOR

**D**ONNA VICKERS, senior, sociology, with a minor in nonprofit administration, and her daughter, Ashlie Vickers, senior, business administration in supply chain and analytics, know that there is always room for improvement. Both have worked tirelessly to improve themselves, their communities, the processes at their jobs, and even boom boxes. The mother-daughter team will both celebrate their achievements and graduate together this upcoming May.

Their graduation comes during an exciting year in both of their

found time around her busy life as a nurse, mother, and wife to become an ordained minister, create and bottle her own all-purpose seasoning, start a business called Simply Cooking With Donna around her cooking products, self-publish a cookbook entitled “Meals Seasoned With Love,” and found Donna’s Restoration Diner and Community Outreach Center (DRDCOC). She continues to serve as the organization’s executive director. “We serve the underserved in the community,” she said, citing some of the organization’s charitable activities, such as doing back-to-school giveaways, adopting families at the holidays, providing meals for families

be made with Donna’s all-purpose seasoning, they will also be free of additives and MSG and contain little sodium.

Even with all of these accomplishments, Donna was not finished. She returned to school in 2014 to pursue her B.A. in sociology with a minor in nonprofit administration. “I became ill. I was disabled, and so then the wheels started turning about what to do next, and this was part of my ‘what-to-do-next,’” Donna said.

While Donna hopes that her minor in nonprofit administration will help her reach her ultimate goals for DRDCOC, her decision to pursue sociology was inspired by another great servant: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Donna visited a museum while on a trip to Atlanta. “They had [an exhibit] for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and they had all of his accomplishments listed, and I just looked down at the little metal plate that was next to the exhibit and it said he received a degree in sociology, and I said, ‘Oh, okay, that’s what I will get my degree in,’ and now I’m here,” Donna laughed.

Donna sees her degrees working together to help her more effectively serve her community and those around her. “I enjoy the ability to serve,” she said. “That’s who I am. ... I like both aspects [of my degree]. The sociology helps me to serve by understanding people, and then the nonprofit allows me to be hands-on, and I’m really a hands-on [person] ... but I want to understand the people, so the two [degrees] merge together with my ability to cook and ... those things ... brewed up to the perfect storm.”

Like her mother, Ashlie also works to improve things, has excelled in all of her pursuits, and has worked hard to achieve her goals



Ashlie Vickers and her mother, Donna, are graduating this year.

LEAH JONES / THE CURRENT

“It’s your own education. Don’t let it be norms or standards that stop you from doing what you want to do.”

lives. “She’s turning 30 this year, which is a big milestone. I’m turning 50, which is a big milestone, so it’s kind of a big year,” Donna said. “We are celebrating!”

The two began attending the University of Missouri–St. Louis at different times, and Ashlie attends school part-time around her full-time job, so the two did not know that their graduations would coincide until recently. While both expressed excitement, Ashlie was a little more cautious with her enthusiasm at first. “I wasn’t sure what was going to happen,” she said. “[I was concerned that] we were going to miss each other’s graduation.”

Self-described as a servant at heart, Donna has dedicated her life to helping improve both health and social problems in the community around her. Donna previously worked as a nurse, though she

on Thanksgiving, participating in Toys for Tots, and running a clothing closet to provide people in need with free clothes.

The website for DRDCOC states that the organization’s mission is not only to meet the basic needs of the underprivileged in St. Louis but also to “restore love, hope, dignity, responsibility, and the desire to dream and achieve such dreams by teaching immediate and long-term life skills that will ultimately improve their situation,” and to provide nonjudgmental services, regardless of race, creed, religion, and gender.

“My long-term goals for that is to actually have a complete center up and operating where we can serve those who are hungry for free in an actual restaurant-type setting,” Donna said. While the meals will be judgement-free, since the meals will

## Escape the Room, But Stay at UMSL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
on campus.”

Henning said the members of UPB could have set up the escape room themselves, but they instead chose to have a group called Campus Escapes set up the room. “They have their own plot and story and lots of items in the room already,” Henning explained.

Campus Escapes, which operates as a part of a larger group called Kirkland Productions, offers two storylines for their room escapes. The one that UPB held on Tuesday was called, “The Mystery on Mount Olympus,” and casts participants as descendants of Greek gods who attempt to usurp power on Mount Olympus by taking Zeus’ lightning bolt while he is away at a festival. Players must bribe Charon, the mythical Greek ferryman, with a gold coin within the allotted 25 minutes.

According to Campus Escapes’ website, the other Escape the Room theme is called “The Philosopher.” Like Sansom, Cistrump, and Henning, the website also cites the potential for building skills crucial to students’ success later in life. “This activity, besides being great enter-

tainment, is designed to get a group focused on leadership and team building as they work together using the available tools combined with logic to escape the room in a set period of time,” the website states.

Henning said that UPB got into contact with Campus Escapes at a conference. “We were already kind of looking for an escape room. So, once we met this group, it just kind of seemed like a perfect match,” she said.

Henning continued to explain how events like the Escape the Room are a part of UPB’s larger mission on campus. “Our purpose as an organization is to provide events on campus that meet all of the needs of the students. We want to have fun events like this, but we want to have educational events. ... We want to have supportive events, so things like the spirituality program that we are having next week,” she said. “Basically [we are] trying to plan a lot of events for students on campus, so that they have something to do here and then generally to have some kind of purpose to the event as well, to help them grow in their college experience.”

Before the Alpha Xi Delta mem-

bers entered the room, Cistrump considered what would happen if they were unable to escape the room. “I’m assuming, I’m hoping, that they will let us out. ... I’m pretty sure it would cost a lot of money to keep us in there as long as it might take to get us out,” she laughed.

According to Campus Escapes’ website, teams who do not complete the challenge still get group pictures, as well as a post-game talk about how they could have accomplished their task. Teams that do complete the task also get a picture, though their picture comes with bragging rights.

The UPB will host many other fun and educational events on campus during the rest of the semester, including hosting Trevor Noah with special guest Hasan Minhaj in the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center on April 29. While there are currently four board members, Henning said that next year they will expand to seven board members. To find out about these events and to find out more about the UPB, check out their Triton Sync page at [orgsync.com/59711/chapter](http://orgsync.com/59711/chapter). You can also find them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/umslUPB?ref=hl](http://www.facebook.com/umslUPB?ref=hl).

even before coming to UMSL. Ashlie works as a buyer at PLZ Aerospace, a large aerosol manufacturer in Pacific, Mo., but she said that she knew that she would need to get a degree to further advance to director, vice president, or COO level in her career. “After doing really well at work, I decided that I needed to go back and get a degree so that I could really get where I wanted to go,” she said.

UMSL’s Supply Chain and Analytics homepage cites supply chain and analytics as the most recommended major by [payscale.com](http://payscale.com). “The degree gives you the knowledge of understanding the theory behind supply chain, so it gives you that knowledge base,” Ashlie said.

“I am not just very numbers focused but increased productivity focused, and I like efficiencies. I like to see people do better at whatever the task is at hand. So that is why supply chain fits me. There are so many opportunities in supply chain that you can make a difference for the company, whether it’s increasing sales or it’s increasing productivity on the bottom line, but just increasing processes,” Ashlie explained. “I’ve always been able to take something and say ‘Okay, how can I make this better?’ so supply chain fits.”

Donna corroborated that Ashlie has always worked to improve things. Donna said that when Ashlie was about 12 years old, she and her husband bought Ashlie a boom box. While the boom box played music, it was not capable of recording people singing; that is, until Ashlie got a hold of it. “I still don’t know what I did to this day,” Ashlie laughed. “It was a new item at that point!”

While Ashlie has always been good at rearranging things to make them work more efficiently, she, like her mother, also hopes to give back to her community. “People don’t

understand what supply chain and analytics is,” she said. “High school students have never heard of it. ... So getting that degree allows me to give that information back to people.”

While both mother and daughter have excelled at everything that they have set their mind to, their journeys have not been without challenges. As someone who analyzes the effectiveness of processes and systems, Ashlie noted that there are some unique challenges for adult students. “I want to get the information that I need and I want to be able to walk out of the door and be able to apply that information. A lot of the times the teachings that you get are geared toward people who just came out of [high school], which is perfectly [fine]. ... But you have this entire base of students who are now coming back as adults, and I think that’s a challenge,” Ashlie explained. “You have to start tailoring some of that [teaching] towards that student base because it is a large student base.”

Donna said that she has had minimal challenges during her time at UMSL. “I don’t see that I have had ... a challenge because I have flexibility and I have a big support team,” she said. “It has been almost a clear shot. I just kind of went straight through it ... except for math. But I overcame that one too!”

“The fuel for me has been first, my husband, my daughters, who have helped me tremendously along the way,” Donna continued. “Everyone has been so supportive of me going back to school. A lot of people say, ‘Well, you are already a nurse, what are you going back to school for?’ and sometimes, it used to throw me back, [and I would ask] ‘Why am I going back to school?’ But I had to pull the whole thing together. ... My biggest push [has been] proving to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



# The Alternative to a Free Press Is Propaganda, Governor

**KAT RIDDLER**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**T**HIS WEEK the “St. Louis Post-Dispatch” and the “Kansas City Star” took the unprecedented step of running a joint editorial. The topic of their concern was the lack of transparency on the part of the administration of Missouri Governor Eric Greitens.

Taking a move from the Donald Trump playbook, Missouri’s new Governor steadfastly refuses to release financial details about who is funding his frequent flights to Washington, D.C. or who donated the funds for his lavish inauguration celebration. He also emulates the President in his disdain for the press and refuses to hold press conferences or grant interviews.

Instead, Greitens chooses to communicate through Facebook and Twitter, where he can carefully craft his message and control his own image.

The Governor posted a picture on social media of himself on the phone in his office fist-pumping into the air in celebration. The photo explained he had just heard that a company was going to bring some new jobs to Kansas City because Missouri had passed the legislation for “Right-To-Work.” The post was February 10, and he had signed “Right-to-Work” legislation on February 8. First, we have to believe the company executives made a near split-second decision to drop everything and move to Missouri from California. Second, it seems somewhat incredulous that Governor Greitens just happened to have a photographer in the room at the very moment he got the phone call from the company announcing the job, causing his completely not-fake, natural, fist pump in the air to occur. Perhaps he pre-screened the call and asked if it was going to be good news, then asked them to wait until he could get a photographer to record the special moment. But who wants the pesky press around to point out the obvious flaws in a staged publicity photo opportunity?

A few weeks later on February 23, another photo of the Governor was posted to Facebook. Again, a photographer just happened to be present at the very second the Gov-



Governor Greitens shows off his signature move in these ostensibly posed photos.

**The Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to bare the secrets of government and inform the people.**

**Justice Hugo Black (1886 - 1971)**  
United States Supreme Court

ernor heard about a company that was going to expand in Macon, Mo., because of all his great pro-growth policies. We wondered if that photographer has to sit in the corner of the bedroom in the Governor’s mansion in case Greitens gets a call in the middle of the night.

The propaganda machine will really crank up now that a new nonprofit founded by Governor Greitens’s campaign treasurer, A New Missouri Inc., can start taking millions of dollars secretly.

This raises an interesting ques-

tion: why? Why does he need a secret slush-fund with dark money and hidden donors? Why is he spending so much time in Washington? It looks to us like he is being groomed to run for national office—not president just yet. He might even have his eye on the U.S. Senate seat up in 2018. While that may seem a rather sudden leap for the newly elected Governor, Greitens knows that if you stick around too long slashing budgets and ducking questions, you might just become unpopular.

## Don't Mind Your Own Business

**NATHAN WATSON**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

We all know somebody who, for whatever reason, cannot seem to mind their own damn business. Whether solicited or not, they are always eager to throw their two cents into a situation and, more often than not, their contribution is negatively critical. You have made or are making a mistake in judgement somewhere, and it is their job to point this out to you.

As annoying as such people may be, their relentless prying is only an exaggerated aspect of an indispensable aspect of social interaction. Like it or not, the characteristic nosiness of other humans and the likelihood that we will have to jus-

tify our behaviors to others is one of our primary motivations for moral action. Knowing that we must hold ourselves accountable to others is often the only thing that holds us back from doing what is right.

But, even if we are relatively “good” people—that is, even if we do what is right not out of fear of judgement or punishment, but out of a sense of duty—we nonetheless suffer from a number of deficits in moral ability. Even in many cases where we distrust our intuitions about the rightness of wrongness of a certain action, further deliberation is likely to serve little benefit if it is not done correctly.

Because of this, it is important that our moral reasoning move beyond internalized deliberation and

into the moral “space of reasons,” to borrow and slightly modify a concept made popular by philosopher Wilfrid Sellars. Although Sellars used the phrase to refer to the nature of knowledge of the natural world, it can just as aptly apply to morality. Knowledge, for Sellars, involves “justifying and being able to justify what one says,” and a similar process occurs when we argue with a dissenting voice. By engaging in public (i.e. with at least one other person) deliberation with somebody who holds an opposing viewpoint, we are committing ourselves to justifying and being able to justify what we do.

Unfortunately, many harbor the belief that performing these judgments is a bad thing, a sort of inva-

# In Defense of the English Major

**DANIEL STRAWHUN**  
A&E EDITOR

**W**HAT IS your major? All college students have had to answer this trite, timeworn question at least once during their academic careers. And while the banality of the question itself is enough to make some people cringe, we English majors—that is, those of us who have given ourselves to the study of literature and rhetoric—have additional cause for recoil. That is because our answer to the question is inevitably met with a further question: “English? What are you going to do with THAT?”

We all have different ways of responding to this incredulous interlocutor, who perhaps for a brief

the context of our shallow, extroverted, and materialistic culture, it certainly is not.

A degree in English will not directly contribute to the development of infrastructure, technology, medicine, nor anything else that is practical and external. That is because the study of English (and, more broadly, the humanities) is a fundamentally introverted pursuit focused on the development of the self, and the resultant primary value of such a pursuit never escapes the self. A degree in English is therefore worthless in the context of American populist culture because it serves the individual while offering little or no benefit to the masses.

So no—as far as the current culture is concerned, we are not going to “do” anything with our English degrees. A degree in English serves the individual, not the collective. We ought to be clear and forthright about this rather than attempt to

**We are not going to “do” anything with our English degree, that is, unless becoming an educated member of society capable of well-formed, perspicacious thought is considered “doing something.”**

moment thought we had simply mispronounced the word “engineering.” Some of us are quick to cite the practical applications of a degree in English: editing, technical writing, journalism, and law are just a few fields in which an acute understanding and precise application of language are paramount. Others of us put on self-deprecatory airs. “That’s a good question,” we say, acknowledging that our futures are indeed unclear. Still others of us claim that we will teach, whether or not we actually intend to. Or we simply mumble something vague about grad school, preferring to defer our answer to a later date.

What we should say instead, but unfortunately never do, is that we are not going to “do” anything with our English degree, that is, unless becoming an educated member of society capable of well-formed, perspicacious thought is considered “doing something”—which within

justify our introverted choices with an extroverted system of values.

Furthermore, when faced with this question, we ought to point out and object to the speaker’s vulgar implication that the pursuit of higher education should always be an undertaking motivated primarily by the promise of financial gain. “What are you going to do with THAT?” is just an oblique way of saying, “What are you going to produce with that (in order to exact compensation)?” A degree in English is not a means to an end but an end unto itself. The university is not a trade school, although the middle-class now largely treats it that way. As English majors, we do not simply seek to learn a profitable skill that we can perform in exchange for compensation; rather, we seek to develop our intellect and emotions for the sake of the development itself.

## WHAT'S NEW in THE CURRENT

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# UMSL MDMC 2017 in April at Union Station

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The poster for this year's MDMC.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3  
Drake in 2013 at UMSL. It was a half-day event with speakers who participated via Google Hangouts in the J.C. Penney Conference Center. In 2014, the conference expanded to a full day and filled the conference center. In 2015, the conference outgrew UMSL with the exhibit hall and keynote packed with attendees. In 2016, the conference moved to St. Louis Union Station, doubling the capacity and attendance of the conference. At this time, the conference rebranded itself as MDMC.

Drake is excited for several additions to this year's conference. He said, "We have joined forces with the AR/VR association and have created the AR/VR Zone within the Exhibitor Hall that will feature the latest in AR/VR software and hardware from five different companies. We also will have an opening night party fully sponsored by Momentum Worldwide, featuring free food and drinks. Our startup competition is sponsored by Purina and UMSL Accelerate. And finally, there are our prestigious new additions to the speaker lineup which include

Facebook, GoDaddy, Forrester, and Twitter."

Hanah Brown, senior, marketing, said, "I think it's important for students to attend MDMC because ... this event gives us the chance to learn about new tools, best practices, and even different ways to think outside of the box for the careers we will be jumping into soon. I'm looking forward to networking with industry professionals and influencers, and learning from a different perspective altogether."

UMSL students can purchase discounted tickets with a valid UMSL ID for \$50, but only 100 of these tickets are available. The pass includes access to all keynotes and concurrent sessions, access to the exhibitor alley, access to the job and career fair, morning and afternoon coffee and snacks, a goodie bag, an invitation to the opening night party, and PowerPoints of all presentations. Exhibitor Hall passes and Career and Professional Development Fair passes can be bought separately. Tickets can be purchased online at [umsldigitalconference.com/](http://umsldigitalconference.com/).



MDMC logo.

## 'Mind Your Business:' When Privacy Is Detrimental to Moral Behavior

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

sion of privacy. A number of memes feed into this belief, including some whose original intent was benign. It is true that we should be without sin before we cast stones at another sinner; yet asking another sinner to give reasons for their actions is perhaps what they needed to challenge the beliefs that led to their actions. Imagine the following three scenarios.

(1) You are in the supermarket when you begin to hear a familiar commotion: a young child, probably in their "terrible twos," begins throwing a temper-tantrum to the embarrassed dismay of his mother. After a few vain attempts to silence the child, the fraught mother turns the child around and delivers a quick and smarting blow to the child's rear end. You, a development psychologist and parent of three successful, adult offspring, believe that spanking is at best ineffective and, at worst detrimental.

(2) Your co-worker, John, has three school-aged children about whom he frequently complains. Chief among his complaints is that he can never afford to buy all the things they need. Most recently, he had to forego buying his kids new school supplies. Last week you overheard him telling another co-worker about his plan to buy a brand new sports car with his anticipated Christmas bonus. Concerned that his money would perhaps better be spent in a savings fund for his children, you consider speaking up and trying to persuade him out of his current plans.

Should you step in and suggest to the shopping parent that their behaviors may not be conducive to the child's well-being? Should you suggest to your co-worker, John, that his money is perhaps well-spent saving for his children's futures? Whether you agree or disagree with the actions taken by these imaginary characters is not what's at issue. No matter what your stance on a controversial issue, you are bound to come across people with different attitudes and beliefs, and whose behaviors elicit your disapproval. The question is whether it is right or wrong to challenge such people. To answer in the negative by appealing to the merits of privacy, or to somehow require that the observer "has his own house in order" before he criticizes the behavior of others is to reveal a profound misunderstanding of the nature of morality.

The upshot, of course, is that an effective exchange of moral reasoning requires a certain extent of intellectual honesty: both parties must be willing to both engage in the topic rationally and, if their beliefs or reasons for action turn out to be lacking, they must be willing to change their mind. The social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has suggested that we are notoriously bad at this sort of intellectual honesty. As Haidt discovered in a number of experiments, people more often than not simply reaffirm their original beliefs and behavior when they are no longer able to justify them to another person. Yet there is a silver-lining to his discovery: professional philosophers (who have, through training,

been encouraged to engage in such reasoning in a relatively impartial and honest manner) seem to be open to changing their mind. This difference is likely attributable to many philosophers' understanding of morality as such a constructive endeavor, so there is little reason to believe that such a change cannot be brought about by others.

And the flip side of this coin is that, obviously, you owe the same reasons to yourself and other people. As a moral agent, you ought to be not only willing, but eager to provide justificatory reasons for your behavior. For, even if you trust the acuity of your own moral judgment, honest engagement with dissenting voices is the only way to

constantly keep guard against the human tendency towards errors in moral judgement. So, the next time a brown-noser offers their two cents into how you should live your life, welcome their contribution as an opportunity to engage in the only practice that keeps us accountable as moral agents.

## UMSL Mother-Daughter Duo Will Graduate Together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
myself that I can still do it. It's not too late. I always wanted the campus experience. I went to college, but it wasn't a campus experience and I wanted that to be a part of my history."

While the duo never had any classes together, both agreed that the help and support that they gave each other throughout their time at UMSL brought them closer together. "I believe it has definitely strengthened our relationship," Donna said. "It's just good [to have] the reassurance and the reminders, [about] 'Hey did you do this? Did you fill out your FAFSA?'"

Ashlie explained, "It's another connection. It's something else that we can talk about with each other, but we're talking about it from the same viewpoint. We're both students."

"I'm very protective of my mama now," Ashlie continued. "Now it is

like, if something is not going right with her at school, I am like, 'What happened? What do I need to do? Who do I need to talk to?'"

"I'm still the mom!" Donna laughed.

While Ashlie had originally feared that their graduations may fall on the same day, her graduation will fall on Mother's Day, and her mother's graduation will take place the next day. After their family comes into town to celebrate their big year, the mother-daughter duo have planned a vacation to Dubai and Egypt. Donna chose Dubai, while Ashlie cited her childhood fascination with King Tut as her reason for choosing Egypt.

"That's our graduation present," Ashlie said. "That's the good thing about being in school as an adult. You can really celebrate. You have the money to celebrate."

While both women persevered to improve their own lives and the

world around them, they both also encouraged others to do the same, despite difficulties and obstacles.

"It's never too late, it doesn't matter how long it takes you. It's your own education," Ashlie said. "The four years doesn't fit everybody. Going right after high school doesn't fit everybody. It's whatever works for you, and don't let anything stop you from going. Don't let it be norms or standards that stop you from doing what you want to do."

Donna concurred with her daughter. "In my case, it was an illness, and I knew a lot of people who just gave up, and they just don't push forward. Especially as we get older ... illnesses do happen and people will ... say, 'Well, I'm done.' Well, you should never be done learning. You should die learning. It's an attribute that we should all cherish: the ability to learn and the ability to give back. I think those are the most important things."