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Campus in brief

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BY Staff

Students spend night in center

By Lene Johansen

MU's new Life Sciences Center has slowly filled with faculty and students this fall. Senior Associate Director Mike Chippendale has spent most of the fall accommodating new inhabitants of the center and doing things such as silencing banging pipes and getting the wireless network running.

He did not expect, however, that he would have to deal with students who were too dedicated to leave.

Three students spent five nights in the atrium last week. After working into the wee hours of the morning, they were too tired to leave and decided to camp out on the atrium couches.

"We don't mind that the students nod off in these areas during the day," Chippendale said. "But we prefer that they go home at night."

With an impish gleam in his eyes, he said the center is well-equipped to handle guests: The bathrooms hold to a high standard, even though the building does not have showers, and the Catalyst Café opens at 7 a.m., so guests can catch a bite to eat and drink some coffee.

Chippendale and other staff at the Life Sciences Center look at this as a humorous event. The overnight guests were students who got into the building during regular hours. The students' dedication to their work must be heartening, at least to some.

Break between study sets helps memory

By Krista Nichols

Multitasking might not be the most efficient way to get things done anymore.

Michael Bunting, a post-doctoral fellow in the department of psychological sciences at MU, gives that tip to college students based on recent research in working, or short-term, memory.

Bunting said if a student is studying for two tests and the classes have similar content, the overlap between the information could interfere with memory by hurting a student's ability to recall the facts for one test or the other.

Andrew Conway, a doctoral student at Princeton University who worked with Bunting on the project, said that to cope with overlap in testing material, students should have a gap between studying sets of information.

“Distributed practice leads to better learning,” Bunting said.

He said dividing study time over many sessions and refreshing the mind of what was previously studied helps improve the outcome of studying in general.

“It’s hard to do sometimes when tests are the same day, especially during finals week,” Bunting said.

Having even a small break between study sessions can help in memory recall for exams. Bunting said learning a lot of information in one setting can cause problems later when trying to recall and sort out the information.

He said that a person’s level of working memory capacity does not matter, but a person with a greater capacity can deal with the overlap better.

Breaks from studying are the time for television or radio, Bunting said. Using these media while studying would be interference and hurt the effectiveness of the study time.

Bunting, Conway and Rich Heitz, a graduate student at Georgia Institute of Technology, found that reducing interference and unrelated information allows for quicker and more accurate memory recall for many people.

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