WHAT MAKES THE University of Missouri stand apart from other schools? MU faculty, students and alumni worked together for many years to answer this question, and by January 2010, had come up with five specific areas collectively called “Mizzou Advantage.” The initiatives are Sustainable Energy, Food for the Future, One Health/One Medicine, Media of the Future and Managing Innovation. Each branch is backed by a network of faculty members, departments, corporate partners, and even other universities. Each group works to raise MU’s positioning in higher education, create jobs and improve the quality of life for Missourians. “Putting the experts together allows us to solve real-world problems in a way other universities can’t,” says program director Meg Phillips. “MU faculty already have a wonderful spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration. Mizzou Advantage provides additional incentives and infrastructure for faculty to work across disciplines.”

HES associate dean Jo Britt-Rankin oversees the Food for the Future aspect of Mizzou Advantage. The university is home to 21 research centers, farms and forests that span more than 14,500 acres across the state, and Britt-Rankin, also an HES Extension faculty member, has developed local, statewide and national networks concerning food, nutrition and health.

Faculty and students – including some of the world’s top scientists in wheat, corn and soybean research – work to develop healthy and affordable food. “The University of Missouri’s faculty and facilities uniquely position the institution to meet the global challenges facing the food industry,” Britt-Rankin says. “Students and private industry have the opportunity to collaborate with some of the leading researchers in the world at MU.” Their efforts have local and national impact: MU, which ranks in the top-10 in the U.S. and in the top-20 globally in plant and animal research impact, also serves locally grown foods in campus dining facilities, and nutrition educators reach more than 350,000 Missourians annually with healthy eating and physical activity information.

Students can earn a Food Safety and Defense graduate certificate, while researchers are focused on creating healthy new food products, including soy chicken, organic ice cream and Omega-3 pigs. Researchers also study human exposure to the toxic chemical bisphenol A (BPA) and work with food banks and pantries to find new ways to reduce hunger and increase food security. “As we face the need to double food production by the year 2050, MU faculty are positioned to meet this challenge,” Britt-Rankin says. “Students and private industry working alongside these faculty will ensure we reduce the number of hungry people worldwide.”

### Extension

Better Together

Mizzou Advantage encourages interdisciplinary collaboration to solve real-world problems

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUSTAINABLE ENERGY</td>
<td>Address energy issues; expand the work at MU’s Research Reactor; develop education programs in nuclear and other kinds of energy; research biofuels; examine business models; assess the environmental, cultural and social consequences of energy use and production.</td>
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<td>FOOD FOR THE FUTURE</td>
<td>Capitalize on MU’s strengths in plant and animals sciences, food safety and biosecurity, local food systems; research on aging, obesity and chronic disease; develop food-related work in the arts, humanities and social sciences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONE HEALTH/ONE MEDICINE</td>
<td>Continue being a leader in the convergence of human and animal health; connect with research and instruction in healthcare delivery, policy, business models, medical ethics and the culture of healthy living.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIA OF THE FUTURE</td>
<td>Draw on the School of Journalism’s century of media-research leadership and hands-on training; develop digital technologies, business, public policy, graphic design and writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANAGING INNOVATION</td>
<td>Bring together various areas of the university to study how current technologies fundamentally change; how developments generate new opportunities, change business models and alter the way we live.</td>
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