

# Beech faculty care for stray cats

By Tierney Sutton  
Staff reporter

The overpopulation of cats in Winfield is something that everyone has noticed. However, with the growing issue still occurring, more and more cats are suffering.

Melinda Current, professor of health and wellness promotion, and Bob Gallup, professor of physics and mathematics, have dedicated their free time to taking care of a few strays that live on campus as well as tackle the harsh reality the effect of over population has.

When seeing a homeless cat, people's first instinct is to leave out food, however this can add to the problem. "Giving a cat who is not spayed or neutered food is just contribut-



**Bob Gallup**

ing to the problem. It makes them healthy so they can have even more babies. The most important thing you can do for a homeless cat is to get it fixed. A female cat can get pregnant even when it's lactating," said Gallup.

Gallup takes care of four cats that live around campus, but before he fed them, he made sure they were all fixed. "It might sound cruel, but when I feed them, I make sure that I don't leave any food behind for other cats to eat." He has been buying food for the campus cats since 2008, and feeds them in mornings and at night. Gallup also provides warm water and heated blankets to help them digest their food.

"On a very deep level, I take care of things. It's not just what I do, it's who I am. I tend to be attracted to taking care of things that are neglected, abandoned, or abused. It's not just cats," said Gallup. "For example, I take care of the plants in Beech Science Building because they were not doing

well and to be honest, teaching comes from the same place. That's the emotional place that it is coming from for me."

Current has also done her best to help cats without homes by fostering a total of 97 cats from the local shelter. She ended up adopting two of those cats.

"Spaying and neutering is obviously the most important thing, but the second is fostering. People with time on their hands can make a big difference," said Current.

"The shelter does a lot here for the cats, but fostering really helps them out, especially during kitten season. Also, it is important to note that the shelter offers cheap spaying and neutering for those who need it."

Beth Schmith, director of Cowley County Animal Shelter, agreed that the biggest thing the public can do to help the cats of Winfield is to spay and neuter their own pets. Taking this step can help prevent any further breeding.

"If you have a house income of \$50,000 or less we will spay and neuter your cat for \$30. Winfield really doesn't need any more kittens than it has. Cats create colonies, which increases breeding, so I cannot stress how important it is to spay and neuter your pets." said Schmith.

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# Suicide task force supports struggling students

By Shawn Knepper  
Staff reporter

Getting an education at an institution is supposed to be the most important accomplishment in any student's life. Instead, it becomes an unbearable moment for some. Student debt, loans, tuition, grades. It may become too much to bear the responsibilities and sometimes, it appears there's no way out to escape the nightmare than "ending it all."

Suicides are becoming more common on campuses across the United States and internationally. Suicide is the second most common cause of death in students across the country, only behind automobile accidents.

Based on statistics from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, about 6.6-7.5 percent

of undergrad students have seriously considered suicide, 2.3 percent have made a plan and 1.2 percent actually attempted suicide.

From 2004 to 2009, The Schwartz Research Group at the University of Arizona conducted a study on the rate suicides committed by students and about 7 per 100,000 students across the U.S. had died of suicide, and the numbers continue to rise each year.

Students are at risk based on their mental and physical conditions, such as mental health issues, substance abuse and history of physical and sexual abuse. Schools across the United States and the world are now taking the necessary steps to help prevent suicides and save lives.

Dan Falk, vice president of student affairs, set up a pro-

gram at Southwestern last year called the Suicide Task Force. "Last year, I created a Suicide Task Force that comprised of staff and faculty members who looked that the issue on SC's campus. We read current research and bench marked other institutions on how we can tackle the issue," said Falk.

"We decided to be more proactive. So, we created the Health Fair last September that had flu shots, a blood drive, HIV testing and mental health screenings at the library. The reason we put it all in one place is that we felt we would get more mental health screenings completed. We did screen over 100 hundred students for depression and anxiety. I think that was a good start."

Taking these positive measures is crucial in ensuring students who may be struggling

feel they are not alone and in making the environment safer for them. Family members should also be aware of the wellbeing of their own children, since students have the tendency of being homesick.

Sarah Hallinan, director of residence life, said Southwestern College will always be willing to reach out their students.

Hallinan said, "I oversee residence life. We are being intentional to provide community-building programming in the residence halls. We are trying to make sure we have a supportive environment for students."

Hallinan said the school's resident assistants complete bi-weekly community status reports and note student concerns as well as student successes. The resident assistants

are also trained to look for signs of distress and know how to refer students to Mary Ann Smith, wellness coordinator. Smith meets with each resident assistant in October for a mid-semester check-in and follow-up from fall resident assistant training.

As the Suicide Task Force takes off, it is now in the hands of students and faculty to lift the voices of sorrow and sing melodies of healing for students who may be struggling. If you or someone you know are in need of counseling, you may email Mary Ann Smith at maryann.smith@sckans.edu to set up an appointment.

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## Mobility continued

Lock Schnelle, head athletic trainer, estimates around 30 students experience mobility-hindering injuries, such as ankle and knee sprains and ACL and

MCL tears. These injuries can leave students in boots or on crutches, and Schnelle said he tells injured athletes to keep "slow and steady" on their

minds while navigating campus. "It's not the easiest campus to get around, but that doesn't mean you can't get around," said Schnelle. "Kids are pretty

resilient with crutches and stairs, though. They get the hang of it and find new ways to get around. It just might take longer to get from point A to

point B." *Tessa Castor is a junior majoring in English. You may email her at tessa.castor@sckans.edu.*