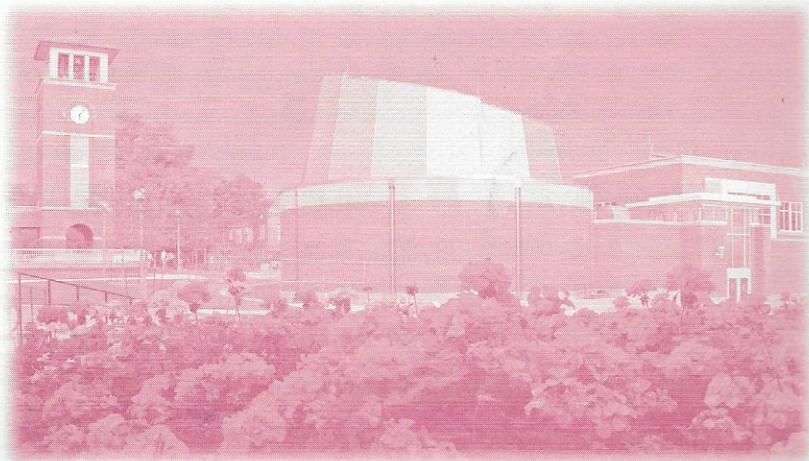


# Truman Tomorrow: Arete



STUDENT  
SENATE

Truman State University



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## FOREWORD

Many of the students who now attend Truman State University are entirely unaware of the drastic changes undergone by the University throughout its history. No longer are we a regional state university with a general education mandate. Although the history and traditions remain strong among alumni, faculty, and staff, Northeast Missouri State University is a foreign concept to the students of the twenty-first century.

With the change to a statewide liberal arts and sciences mission came the need for a new name for the University. This was first suggested in the students' first Vision for the University fifteen years ago. The University community took notice and Truman State University was born soon thereafter.

In the spirit of constantly striving to improve the University, we are proud to present the students' fourth Vision for Truman State University. Truman has achieved incredible things during the past twenty years, but we are not content to rest on our laurels. Truman has met its objectives admirably in the past, but must now unabashedly seek new and rigorous challenges with which to better the institution and the academic community. One such challenge is to make the University nationally recognized as a liberal arts and sciences institution.

This Vision Document is the end result of thousands of hours of hard work and dedication by numerous students. This document would not have been possible without the generous assistance of the students, faculty members, and administrators of Truman State University, who provided valuable input and information on how to improve the University. The 2005-2006 Student Senate also deserves accolades for their hard work and dedication in the process of writing this document. Finally, the passionate and knowledgeable members of the Vision Committee must be recognized for all of their contributions and accomplishments: Kristen Carson, Iosif Neitzke, Daniel Poindexter, and Joe Pomicter; and ex-officio members Brandon Large; Emily Kiddoo, Student Representative to the Board of Governors; Michael Pierson, Speaker of Student Senate 2004-2005; and Mark Kirtland, President of the Student Association 2005-2006.

This document would not have been possible without the impressive diversity of students serving on and aiding the Vision Committee. From first-year students looking for an opportunity to get involved at Truman to graduating seniors with unique knowledge and experience, this document truly represents the breadth and depth of Truman students. It is no accident that the committee had such quality members- it is a testament to the results of a liberal arts education and power of the Truman experience.

As the past twenty years have brought dramatic changes for the betterment of the University, the students expect more dramatic changes to further improve the University in the next twenty years. Now is not the time to rest on the progress that has already been made. We urge that the University continue to strive toward arete—the ancient Greek ideal of a unified community striving for excellence. It is our solemn hope that the Vision set forth in this document helps us achieve that essential goal.

-Robert Kelchen  
Vision Committee Chair, 2005-2006



# THE VISION

*(Original Vision Statement from the April 1991 "Continuing the Renaissance" Student Senate Vision Document authored by Joe Bambenek—Reproduced in the April 1995 "Challenges for a New Era" Vision Document authored by Scott Sifton and the April 1999 "An Education with Character" authored by Danny Rotert)*

A unique and outstanding Public Liberal Arts and Sciences University should provide an atmosphere where exceptional students incorporate the ideals of a liberal education into their lives.<sup>1</sup> It should be a place where diverse students interact with motivated faculty to create a community of learners. A feeling of community should pervade the University in order to create a sense of understanding and shared purpose within the University. Students and faculty alike should be consumed with drive for the inquiry of truth, knowledge, and understanding.

The resources of the University should be directed toward facilitating a Liberal Arts and Sciences Education. The University should provide students with the opportunity to develop their ability to think, to discover the interrelation and interdependence that exists between seemingly unrelated items and ideas, to achieve a high level of competency in a myriad of topics, to gain a thorough and nationally competitive understanding of their discipline, to enhance interpersonal skills, and establish and clarify personal values and beliefs.

The University Community will then give back to society graduates who will tackle Society's greatest challenges. Through a thorough understanding of their discipline, they will conquer lingering problems and explore new frontiers. And with the perspective of a liberal education, they will ensure the responsible use of their developments and inquiries.



# PROLOGUE

For the last fifteen years, Student Senate has maintained a vision for Truman State University. We extend the tradition of our predecessors by bringing forth a document of carefully considered suggestions that are meant to bring the University into the future. Writing this Vision has been a yearlong process that has involved input from countless students and endless hours of discussing the future of the University. We feel confident to present this document to the Board of Governors, the President, the faculty, and the staff as a reflection of the views of the students at this great institution.

The University has become a shining example of academic excellence since becoming Missouri's only highly selective public liberal arts and sciences university two decades ago. Our students excel in a wide range of disciplines and are leading examples of what education has to offer to the state of Missouri. As we approach the twentieth anniversary celebration of our historic mission change and the tenth anniversary of our name change this spring, we are confident in the future of the University.

Fifteen years ago, the authors of the very first student Vision for the University made a call that Truman should become a true liberal arts community that focuses on learning, diversity, and community. We have reached a point where it is time for Truman to shed the shroud that limits it to a regional mission. We must define a national mission that will share our qualities all across the land. It is with this emphasis that we can extend that original Vision by expanding our learning, our diversity, and our community to a level that will be the envy of the nation, not just the Midwest. The students are ready to make the jump to national recognition, as evidenced by the representative principles set forth in this document. We believe that now is the time for Truman's values and standards of excellence to be extended across the country.

It is with the spirit of possibility and unending challenge that we present *Truman Tomorrow: Arete* on behalf of the students, who will earn and maintain the accolades of Truman as a nationally recognized university.



# INTRODUCTION

## HOW THE VISION WAS BORN

**O**n September 2, 1867, Joseph Baldwin opened the private North Missouri Normal School and Commercial College on the current site of Truman State University, becoming one of the first normal schools in the state of Missouri. Baldwin summed up the first year as follows:  
The success during the year [1867] passes all expectation. That in this war cursed region three hundred students should enter such a school during its first year is truly wonderful. The Faculty have consecrated themselves for life to the grand work of building up a Western Institution of unsurpassed merits. With all of their ability, with untiring energy, and with unbounded enthusiasm, they will labor for its success (Violette, 1905, 37).

After becoming the public First District Normal School on December 30, 1870, the school grew in spite of several trying financial periods and the First World War. On July 11, 1919, the school changed its name to Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, which better reflected the liberal education given to all teachers-to-be at the time (Ryle, 1972, 218). Longtime president Walter Ryle best expressed the education given to all Northeast students:

A Midwest teachers college is not a liberal arts college, but it has a liberal arts program equal to that of a liberal arts college. Likewise, its scholastic standards, both for its faculty and students, should be second to no liberal arts college. President Baldwin said on one occasion that 'thorough scholastic occasion lies at the foundation of a teacher's education.' For thirty years, this quotation appeared on the back of most of the publications of the Teachers College under a small picture of the Baldwin statue (Ryle, 1972, 358).

On January 1, 1968, just months after Dr. Ryle retired as president of Northeast, the college dropped the "Teachers" moniker after adding majors other than education and became Northeast Missouri State College. On August 13, 1972, Northeast Missouri State College became Northeast Missouri State University, better representing the wide array of undergraduate and graduate majors available.

After then-Governor John Ashcroft signed legislation on June 20, 1985, Northeast went from being a regional institution to a statewide public liberal arts and sciences university. However, Northeast was still recognized as a regional institution in spite of its new mission.

In 1991, University president Russell Warren invited the Student Senate to share their vision for the future of Northeast. The final product, *Continuing the Renaissance*, addressed how to shed the University's image as a regional university:

Northeast students believe that they have more challenging courses and thus work harder and receive relatively poorer grades than their counterparts at regional universities. They fear they will be judged based upon regional university standards by most people outside, and even some inside the Tri-state Region. A more drastic program should be undertaken to further change the University's image. This



## Truman Tomorrow: Arete

should include breaking the largest and last major tie to its image as a regional university by renaming the University. This change would mark the dawning of the new era of the Renaissance and should be done with considerable student, faculty, staff, and alumni input. The new name should reflect the Liberal Arts and Sciences Mission of the University. If the institution is named after a person, it should be named after a Missourian whose life reflected the ideals of the Liberal Arts and Sciences (Bambenek et al, 1992).

Student Senate recommended a name change in Continuing the Renaissance, the first document to have made such a proposal. In retrospect, it seems that this was a cry from the students to start afresh. With a new name, a new history would begin as the University, like a phoenix, rose from the ashes and pursued a brighter future. The University began an ongoing metamorphosis on July 1, 1996, when the former Northeast Missouri State University officially became Truman State University.

The decade since the sixth name change for the University has been a crucial point in determining the direction of Truman State University. The Liberal Arts and Sciences culture has truly taken hold at Truman as the University has become a magnet for Missouri's and the Midwest's best and brightest undergraduate students. However, we must not rest at this point in time. Truman is too good of a secret to keep its reputation confined to Missouri and the Midwest. The next challenge is to make Truman a nationally known and renowned Liberal Arts and Sciences University.



# CHAPTER 1

## ACADEMICS/THE CURRICULUM

### *The Liberal Studies Program*

The Liberal Studies Program (LSP) is truly the core of the curriculum. It is, as its creators suggested, “a program that balances the liberal arts and general education traditions, that preserves the predisposition, tendencies, and virtues of each” (Leavens et al, 1994). The LSP is truly a multi-disciplinary curriculum in its combination of the artes liberales, the liberal free, and general education ideals that has emphasized student learning. The LSP has put this institution well on its way to accomplishing the goals of *Affirming the Promise: An Agenda for Excellence* by “[offering] a strong liberal arts and sciences curriculum that provides each student with a sound foundation and breadth of requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes regardless of intended area of specialization” while also providing students the essential skills that they need to be a competent college graduate in today’s society (McManis et al, 1997).

The LSP has clearly set the stage for a true liberal arts culture to exist here at Truman. However, we do not believe that the LSP can be a static program if we wish to advance toward that ultimate goal. In a July 19, 2005 presentation, University President Dr. Barbara Dixon discussed reinventing parts of the curriculum. The students join the President in calling for this discussion at Truman. As *Affirming the Promise* stated, “as long as Truman remains committed to the goal of being the best public [Liberal Arts and Sciences] university possible, it will always be in a state of “becoming” (McManis et al, 1997). We seek to start this discussion in this document by outlining the shortfalls of the LSP as it currently stands and offering suggestions of curriculum goals that should be sought in the new core.

As a whole, students are not satisfied with the current LSP. In the 2005 Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ), students were asked about faculty enthusiasm for classes in the core curriculum and responded with a mean of 2.95 on a 4 point scale [4=very adequate; 3=adequate; 2=inadequate; 1=very inadequate] (Gillette et al, 2005). This trend is fairly consistent for all years listed in the Assessment Almanac (Woehlk et al, 2004). This compares to a mean of 3.42 for faculty enthusiasm in major classes. When asked to rate their satisfaction with each component of the LSP, students gave a mean of between 2.78 and 3.10 (Gillette et al, 2005). This is also a fairly consistent trend through all the years of data listed in the Assessment Almanac (Woehlk et al, 2004). These results show a less than adequate mean for faculty enthusiasm in LSP courses and their satisfaction with the LSP courses that they took. This clearly shows a lack of both student and faculty enthusiasm.

In some anecdotal accounts, students have viewed the LSP as “glorified high school” and that they purposely “try to get them [LSP requirements] out of the way” (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). This was clearly not how the LSP or liberal arts thinking in general was intended to be viewed. Students often feel no ownership or attachment to the LSP or the liberal arts ideal. Here, one must remember the Jeffersonian ideal that “education should allow the learner to be a ‘joy to oneself” (Botert et al, 1999). If students believe that the LSP is a burden and just like “high school,” it is not irrational to assume that students are not being a “joy to oneself” through the fulfillment of the Liberal Studies Program.



Students also are dissatisfied with the current structure of the LSP. *Continuing the Renaissance* cited an October 1990 Review Team Report stating that "the core needs to be seen as a vital component of the curriculum not a long series of hurdles for students to complete in the name of rigorous or high academic standards" (Bambenek et al, 1992). In *Challenges for a New Era*, Student Senate observed that "input all indicate[s] that the number of rigid core requirements should be reduced" (Sifton et al 1995).

<sup>1</sup> We again must state that the LSP is a system of rigid core requirements that are seen as a long series of hurdles for students to complete. This feeling is probably the biggest challenge to Truman's Liberal Arts and Sciences culture that exists today. By looking at the definition of liberal arts and sciences in the Oxford English Dictionary, "general intellectual enlargement and refinement . . . not narrowly restricted to the requirements of technical or professional training," it is clear that the current form of the LSP structure is the antithesis of the liberal arts (Egley, 1990, 6). Although the University has expanded beyond technical and professional training, we still narrowly restrict the way in which a student can receive and appreciate a form of knowledge by presenting LSP requirements as a checklist for completion.<sup>1</sup>

*Affirming the Promise* stated that "it is widely anticipated that a major result of this new LSP will be the advancement of the liberal arts and sciences culture at the university in very significant ways" (McManis et al, 1997). It is the feeling of the Senate and the Student Association, based on conclusive data cited earlier, that the LSP has not helped create the desired culture. In some ways, the current LSP may have even hindered such a development.

### *Student Appreciation and Knowledge of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Philosophy*

Because the power of first impressions is so great, it must be considered that the introductory element to the Liberal Arts may be the most important aspect as it sets the foundation for the years of development to come. In this role, the faculty serves as "ambassadors of liberal education, encouraging students to test their limits and to grow in new directions," a particularly vital responsibility during students' first-year experience (Sifton et al, 1995).

Students should learn of the liberal arts in three spheres: the effect on the personal, the educational, and the professional development of the individual. Truman currently does a very admirable job on the educational sphere of this triad. As stated earlier, Truman provides students "with a sound foundation and breadth of requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes regardless of intended area of specialization" (McManis et al, 1997). However, we are lacking in providing the "joy to oneself" of the personal value of liberal learning and are severely lacking in providing a professional rationale for liberal learning. Although employers often recruit at Truman because of our students' liberal education, most students are not aware of how to "sell" their degree. While there is great value in obtaining a liberal arts education for personal benefit alone, it is important to remember that personal well-being includes being able to obtain employment after graduation. It is with some degree of hesitation that we suggest the "selling" of degrees because of a strong belief of learning for the sake of learning, but nevertheless the reality of the situation begs the teaching of the professional sphere as well as the educational and personal.



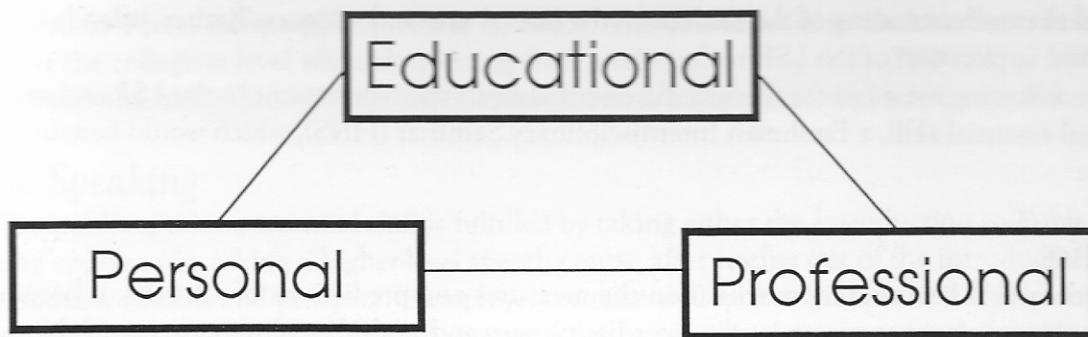


Figure 1. Adapted from Newell 2005, xii

This is not a new suggestion; in fact, one of the first documents written on the liberal arts at this institution spoke of this ideal:

While the structure of the core relieves one of providing a rationale for the importance of a breadth of study, students are often left without an appreciation for the benefits to be derived from such breadth. It is difficult to see how true Liberal Education attitudes can be fostered without a sure and convincing understanding on the part of the student that such education is of fundamental importance, and not simply 'a bunch of classes I have to take' (Egley et al, 1990).

This ideal will truly enrich the liberal arts and sciences culture at Truman. A common acceptance of engaging ideas, learning for the sake of learning, and cross-disciplinary connections will take place at an early stage in the development of the student, simultaneously enriching the culture and the student.

### *Challenging Foundation Classes*

The essential skills, as they have come to be called in the LSP, include writing, speech, statistics, health, elementary functions, and computer skills. These skills truly are "essential." *Continuing the Renaissance* states, "As a house should not be painted, until its walls are completed, rooms should not be taught until the fundamentals are learned" (Bambenek et al, 1992).

The essential skills must become more challenging in the future to ensure these basic elements. The student cannot go into carving the later stages of what should be a continual self-empowering of the student without sharp tools to analyze, interpret, and communicate the lessons learned. By challenging the student in these classes, it will also help to reduce the "set of hurdles" mentality by giving students sincere strength from the garnering of these skills. Transfer courses that fulfill these skills should also be viewed with a high level of scrutiny.

Applicability should also be frequently discussed in a multi-disciplinary fashion. How is the scientist going to use oratory? How is the sociologist going to use statistics? These courses must go beyond formal application and seek to give the student a contextual application as well. It is essential to help students realize that an academic discipline does not just draw from its own body of knowledge. At the most basic level, every field and occupation is multidisciplinary.

These courses should be accomplished by the fourth semester of a student's education, with allowances for transfer students and completing the health and wellness essential skill. Resources and the curriculum should ensure this is accomplished.

At this point, it is essential that students begin the quest of exploration into the liberal arts. No longer should course lists bind a student to higher ordered thinking within the LSP. The current policy of providing lists of classes, while making for an easy governance structure, does little



to propel the understanding of the student in the liberal arts and sciences. Rather, it lends to a mechanical application of the LSP.

The following are goals for the specific essential skills that are present in the LSP and an additional essential skill, a Freshman Interdisciplinary Seminar (FINS), which would benefit students:

### *Statistics*

As the world becomes more reliant on the measures and predictions of statistics, it becomes increasingly important to recognize the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of this essential skill. While learning the fundamentals of statistics is extremely important, it would be wise for the course to draw examples from as many disciplines as possible. The JINS course "Changing the World through Data" is a model of how to intertwine statistics and uses from different disciplines.

### *Elementary Functions*

The elementary functions essential skill is fulfilled by taking both college algebra and plane trigonometry or a course in elementary functions that serves as a pre-calculus class. This essential skill is necessary because of the increased use of mathematical functions and concepts in many disciplines. Again, all efforts must be taken to ensure that examples are drawn from as many disciplines as possible.

### *Computer Literacy*

Since computers have become such a critical part of a Truman education, it is imperative that the University ensures all students have mastered today's essential computer literacy skills. The current computer literacy requirement only calls for students to master such basic concepts as being "able to save, retrieve, copy, print, and delete files" or "able to utilize electronic means of communication" (2005-2007 General/Graduate Catalog, 52). In an era when students grow up using computers, it is safe to expect students to have already mastered these elementary concepts. The computer literacy requirement should reflect the improved skill levels of incoming students and demand competence in areas such as spreadsheet use and website creation.

### *Personal Well-Being*

Taking either an introduction to health science or an introduction to military science course fulfills this essential skill. If there was desire to create a health mode of inquiry, the University was deceitful to call these courses essential skills. If that was not the University's intent, then these courses are in desperate need of reexamination and reevaluation. Through the tenure of this document and in the years to come, the students would like to see a greater emphasis in this skill on a model of teaching that focuses not only on health habits, but also the other responsibilities that come with college such as good fiscal management and a good ethical demeanor. This course in its current form has no place in a liberal education and further ingrains the mentality of mechanical application of the Liberal Arts at Truman. This is a course that must change in order to promote the liberal arts.

### *Writing as Critical Thinking*

In the 2005 GSQ, students rated the Writing as Critical Thinking class as the least-adequate class among all LSP and essential skills classes, with a rating of 2.78 on a scale from 1 (very



inadequate) to 4 (very adequate) (Gillette et al, 2005). The course seeks to teach students how to write at the collegiate level while sharpening their analytical writing skills. This course must become more interdisciplinary in nature in order to create a liberal arts and sciences culture.

### *Public Speaking*

The public speaking essential skill is fulfilled by taking either the Introduction to Public Speaking course or by taking a higher-level speech course after testing out of the introductory class. Since graduate schools and prospective employers require well-spoken graduates, it is imperative that students have as much public speaking experience as possible. It is also critical that the public speaking course is interdisciplinary in nature to prepare students for as many situations as possible. The public speaking course must be fulfilled as early as possible in one's Truman education due to the number of courses that require speaking in public.

### *Freshman Interdisciplinary Seminar (FINS)*

The idea for this course is modeled from several of our peer institutions such as The College of William and Mary, DePaul, and College of New Jersey. In our proposed FINS course, the goals would be fourfold:

- 1) In accompaniment with Truman Week, accomplish the instruction of the ideas set out in the liberal arts philosophy section of this document during the student's first semester at Truman.
- 2) Entail a significant writing requirement that will seek to make each student a college-level writer by exposing students to the writing process and utilizing it throughout the semester.
- 3) Entail a classroom environment that encourages discussion and gives each student the opportunity to present his or her writing. These presentations should include multiple types of speeches such as informative speeches and persuasive speeches. The presentations should also focus on growth over time.
- 4) Introduce ideas of interconnectedness among the disciplines and interdisciplinary thinking.

We believe it is not an overstatement to say that this course may be the most fundamental piece of a Truman student's undergraduate education. It will seek not only to introduce the core of our learning here at Truman, but also to strengthen the essential skills of communication that will enable students to share ideas, both here and in the professional world. Finally, it will open the eyes of students to forms of thinking such as interdisciplinarity that they may have never been exposed to before and which offer numerous opportunities for exploration.

It is also an essential part of this class that the students learn the "joys" of intensive learning. The subject matters of these courses should be derived from popular culture or other stimulating subjects that will entice students to read farther, write longer, and engage ideas with vigor. Lifelong learning can only be achieved when students become impassioned about learning, rather than simply by telling students this is what they should be doing. This course should take off at the word, "welcome," and engage students, in a subject of their choosing, in an intensive style that teaches the merits of good academic study while allowing the student to enjoy greater knowledge of a subject in which they are interested.

Professors for this course should also be restricted to faculty members who possess a clearly demonstrated record of good student reviews. According to the 2004 Interview Projects, twenty-three percent of students interviewed reported that "having a good professor" was the experience that contributed the most to their education in the liberal arts (Woehlk, VI-3). It is essential that



students not have a bad experience within this class; rather, they must have a very engaging and worthwhile experience from a facilitator that will usher in a sense of collegial learning and rigor. This is not an attempt to demean faculty; however, not acknowledging differences that can be seen in faculty success with students would be idealistic and bordering on a lie. In fact, one student explains things best in his portfolio letter:

It started when I was taking LSP. The classes are just basic classes that are taken as requirements for the liberal arts programs so I felt that in many instances (not all, I did *have some* [emphasis added] very good teachers for LSP) the class was not as important to the professor because they had more important classes to teach in their focus area (Woehlk 2004, XIII-24).

This student's sentiment on the LSP courses demonstrates that learning experiences are not the same in every class with every professor and why we must ensure that the best faculty members are instructing our FINS course.

There is some concern among faculty that such a course would need multiple professors that have specialties in writing, speaking, and the subject area that the course was scheduled to tackle. The students do not share this concern. We believe that a selected group of faculty could conduct this class and give students a competent level of knowledge that would suffice the mandate of the essential skill to which is intended to be espoused. It is important to note that each of these skills should be built upon throughout the undergraduates experiences at Truman and many disciplines further fine tune how they expect their students to write and present; therefore this course should give considerable strength to the essential skills of writing and speaking, but could never be considered the end-all to this growth. It is with that understanding that the students are confident that faculty from all disciplines could teach the FINS course.

We encourage this course as a way to free the mind and imagination of the student. We believe that the next three and a half years following the completion of the course may very well allow them to stretch beyond the parameters by which we artificially restrict ourselves and by which we are limited. As a result, we urge that the creation of the FINS course take priority over other curricular changes.

## *Creating and Keeping Student Initiative*

More and more students have to set themselves apart from other students to either advance into graduate school or the working world. No longer do just grades and standardized tests fulfill this equation. The need for initiative within the forte of students' traits is more necessary today as it has ever been. Adding an explicit and strict structure to the curriculum negates the need for student initiative. There are students who mechanically wander through the University's curriculum and graduate, some of whom perhaps even graduate with honors. The mechanical application of the liberal arts and sciences moves away from the true liberal ideal. While "it is tempting to try and reconcile the strands [of a liberal education], to make them neat and clean, that is not the function of the institution, it is the function of the student" (Rotert et al, 1999). This structured approach must cease if a true liberal arts culture is to take hold at Truman.

The following are the two philosophical principles that the University should seek to develop in order to foster student initiative:

### **1. Trusting Students**

Unlike primary education, students choose to come to a university, creating a clearly different dynamic than primary education. Students believe trust shown by faculty is essential, and rate this item as very important when asked "how much the professor trusts you as a student"



(Woehlk 2004, VI-6). If we expect students to be “well prepared for effective living in a diverse and democratic society,” it is essential that our instructors place an ethical burden on us to make good decisions. Making decisions for students in a “baby-sitting” like fashion only ensures the increasing complacency of the college electorate and does not create leaders; instead, it breeds “pencil-pushers” (Woehlk, 2004, XI-20). For this reason, students should be given a bigger stake in decision making in their own choices and in institutional choices.

## 2. Student Decision in the Curriculum

As we move toward a new curriculum, students should be allowed more freedom of choice within course selection. This is consistent with results in the Interview Project in 2004, in which twenty percent of students interviewed cited “more choices” when asked what steps Truman might or should take to strengthen the liberal arts education (Woehlk, 2004, VI-4). This is especially telling as the question was open-ended and the answer was given without a prompt. There is an inherent fear that the goals and outcomes associated with the artes liberales may be endangered by the lessening of the strict sectioning of modes of inquiry and other requirements that specifically exist within the LSP. However, allowing student choice within the core curriculum will significantly benefit the liberal arts culture of this campus and eliminate those fears.

A student-created and student-demanded course selection process would require students to take an appreciation for the curriculum through which they are working. Currently, numerous anecdotal accounts show that students and faculty do not appreciate the LSP courses that they are taking or teaching, respectively. It is necessary as we move towards the next core to bring about an ideal that values student flexibility, thus relying on our pedagogical skills, rather than our current strict curricular goals, to create a truly liberally educated student. The students hope that the University will look to move more toward models of curricular freedom such as exist in honors programs at the College of New Jersey, the College of William and Mary, and DePaul University.

## *Four Powerful Pedagogies and External Learning*

This goal also follows the essence of creating student initiative in that it seeks to set Truman students apart while building student initiative. Therefore, it is the belief of the students that requiring the completion of one of the four powerful pedagogies (internships, undergraduate research, service learning, and study abroad) is in the best long-term interest of all Truman students.

### 1. Internships

One of the duties of Truman State University, as stated in the mission, is to “prepare its students to succeed in rigorous professional and graduate programs” (McManis et al, 1997). To fulfill this duty, Truman has helped and will need to continue helping students into internship programs. Internships provide students with practical experiences and allow a student to connect with individuals in the field in which the student is studying, creating a network which cannot be attained from the classroom. The Truman Review evaluated one student’s internship in Washington D.C. as an assistant for Senator Chuck Grassley, reporting that internships “provide for an excellent learning experience often overlooked by students. Not only did he gain valuable experience, but he also built a respectable network of contacts.”

Currently, however, many Truman students do not have such experiences because many students have not participated in an internship program. In 2005, based on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), eighty-four percent of all first-year students showed a great interest in an internship program, but only seventy-six percent of seniors applied to and participated in



such programs (Gillette et al, 2005). If Truman wants to reverse this trend, students, faculty, and administrators must place more importance on having students engage in internship programs. Additionally, it is important that the University continues to build relationships with alumni, businesses, and agencies across the nation in order to provide internships that are meaningful both in terms of a better education and furthering the individual.

During the Summer 2005 Master Plan Assessment Workshop, high-performing institutions were defined as having “invest[ed] in student success” and providing “leadership from every corner” (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt, 2005). Successful internship programs are a means in which to meet these definitions, but a change in how internships are presented to students is required in order to meet these goals. Instead of promoting internships at the division level, internships must be promoted at the university-wide level. Implementing these goals mandates the reallocation of resources to areas that are not division-specific by promoting and helping students throughout campus enter into internship programs.

One area where additional resources would be beneficial to this end is Truman’s Career Center. One of the most undervalued resources for students with regard to internship programs, the Career Center aids students through the many steps necessary to successfully apply to an internship. Further improving the Career Center would be a key component in improving the number of students who take internships. Thus, with additional resources, the Career Center would be able to update and expand upon its current extensive pool of resources and further aid students in search of internships.

In addition, an improvement in communication among alumni, current students, and faculty will aid in helping students apply for and receive internships. Although some students do share their internship experiences with the Career Center and the various divisions in which they received an internship, a program that will encourage more students to share their internship experiences will be helpful in persuading other students to apply for internships. One possible program would be to suggest that students who take an internship write a journal of their experiences. These journals could be compiled by the Career Center and shared with interested students. Another possible solution would be to increase the involvement of alumni who have entered into the professional world. By allowing students to meet with alumni in fields that interest the students and possibly informing students about available internship opportunities at the alumni’s organizations, students may be more likely to explore the possibilities of an internship in the field of their choosing.

Although these are just a few of the possible programs that could improve the number of students applying for internships, the overarching idea of these programs is the need to better inform and assist the students with internship programs. As one of the main goals of the University is “to devise an institution that will prepare our students to live well and to preserve our democratic traditions in a time few of us will see,” internships that will provide field-related experience, and increased awareness of possibilities is one way to achieve this goal (McManis et al, 1997).

## **2. Undergraduate Research**

Undergraduate research is broadly defined to include scientific inquiry, creative activity, and scholarship. An undergraduate research project might result in a musical composition, a work of art, an agricultural field experiment, or an analysis of historical documents that produces some original work. Many college and university classes require students to write research papers which often fail to require original thought and output. Original work may occur in the context of a class, but it is more likely to occur as an extracurricular activity. Another hallmark of undergraduate



research is the role of the mentor, a faculty member who guides the novice researcher and initiates the student into the methods of a discipline. A student may work collaboratively with a faculty member on a faculty-determined project and be responsible for a piece of the greater project; or a student may work alone on a self-selected project, meeting regularly with his or her faculty mentor. It is essential that the student not work as a “gofer” whose responsibilities end at washing test tubes and beakers, but as someone who is learning discrete skills and advancing to more complex tasks.

A paper entitled *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities* (also known as the Boyer Report) called for crucial changes in the way research campuses educate their students. Those transformations include making research-based learning the standard; constructing an inquiry-based freshman year, culminating with a capstone experience; removing barriers to interdisciplinary education; and cultivating a sense of community. Commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation, the report notes that students in research universities often do not reap the benefits of attending such an institution. An education based on large-enrollment lecture courses and limited faculty/student interaction is derided by the Boyer Commission for operating on a “sage-on-the-stage” model, with the students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. This model does nothing to improve desired workforce skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving. In contrast, the undergraduate research experience gets to the heart of these skills by providing careful guidance from a faculty mentor into the inquiry methods of the discipline.

Given the horrific picture drawn in the Boyer Report, the relationship between students and faculty at Truman State University is a quality of which the University should be proud. When 121 graduating seniors were interviewed in 2005 about faculty encouragement in out-of-class learning experiences, 38 percent volunteered that faculty members actively encourage students to take leadership in extracurricular activities (Gillette et al, 2005).

Data from the Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey revealed that Truman is ahead of not only public, but all four-year universities. More than seventy-nine percent of Truman faculty have worked with undergraduates on a research project, compared to 65.8 percent at public four-year universities and 66.1 percent at all four-year universities (Gillette et al, 2005). Truman even has one of the largest delegations of students every year at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research. Undergraduate students from varying academic divisions are eligible to apply for a research grant and/or participate in summer academies to focus on the research experience. In other words, the university is fulfilling its educational strategy to “provide an academic environment in which well-prepared, highly-motivated students can interact on a regular basis with each other and with outstanding faculty in small learning communities located both inside and outside the classroom” (McManis et al, 1997).

One of the attributes that most employers seek in prospective applicants is the ability to address and work through difficult problems. Truman students will have developed these problem-solving skills by conducting research. As a student progresses through a research experience, the intellectual challenges he or she faces and solves require him or her to integrate classroom knowledge and personal experiences. Truman undergraduates have published their findings in national journals, presented at professional conferences, and participated in Truman's own Student Research Conference. This has helped Truman students gain a competitive edge over our peers from other universities.

### 3. Service Learning

Truman State University seeks to recognize its obligation to “offer services to the community, the region, and the state in the areas of research and public service that are natural outgrowths of



the academic mission of the University," which is to "offer an exemplary undergraduate education to well-prepared students, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences" (McManis et al, 1997). With faculty implementing service learning as a course component, Truman can and will continue to fulfill its mission. Definitions of "service learning" vary, differing as much in terminological shading and nuances as in fundamental divergence. One, by Barbara Jacoby, captures most of the salient characteristics of service learning:

A form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service learning (1996, 5).

Service learning acquires its pedagogical and epistemological roots from the pragmatic philosophy of John Dewey and the educational writings of David Kolb, among others. For Dewey, education ought to be an engaged experience, linking concepts from each discipline with real world social experiences of the learner. The best education joins thought and action, emotion and intellect. Dewey especially rejected the traditional sense of education as a cloistered life, focused on mastering and memorizing purely disciplinary concepts and abstract ideas disconnected from practice (1938). David Kolb, in turn, developed an influential concept of experiential learning, a dual-knowledge theory in which apprehension, knowledge derived from immediate experience and giving "substance" to ideas and concepts, links with comprehension, the more abstract form of knowing which brings critical capabilities to the undifferentiated mass of experiences (1984, 100-131). For service learning, these theories translate into a pedagogy in which students engage in genuine social issues within local communities, generally but not necessarily in coordination with social agencies and organizations.

Yet, these service engagements are advocated not as a mere alternative to classroom learning or just an applied "test" of the ideas taught there, but as a reciprocal learning experience between thought and action. Without linking the community activities back to the subject-based learning taking place in the classroom, service learning would be little more than a collection of random volunteer experiences. Often heard in service learning context is the phrase "reciprocal learning," reflecting the sense of "getting" and "giving back" knowledge and education (Sigmon, 1979, 9-11). In this sense, service learning is different from practicums and basic applied research models, where the "real" world is but a laboratory in which to test concepts. It also differs from internships, which tend to focus on career and job sampling opportunities. Through service learning, students become "participants," even if only for a short time, within social problems. Students then hopefully learn reciprocally from both classroom and the community engagement experiences (Eyler and Giles Jr., 1999, 76-77). As Thomas Tai-Seale has argued, "if service learning is to have a future, it must refocus its efforts on offering service related to the specifically academic components of the individual subjects in the curriculum" (2001, 15).

Another consideration is that our students are conducting community service activities at an astounding rate. Approximately eighty-seven percent of all graduating seniors in 2005 participated in community service activities (Gillette et al, 2005). The twenty-first century undergraduate is indeed coming to college as a true humanitarian in the sense of service to one's neighbor. With that in mind, it seems evident that such a curricular focus prevented by service learning would offer students an easy gateway into the enjoyment of learning through service or service through learning.

Now that the proper frame has been established, the question remains: Is Truman allocating resources in ways that effectively foster service learning?



As a public liberal arts and sciences university, Truman has devoted many resources to addressing this question. Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) revealed a gap between Truman State University and other members of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) in reference to service learning. Students were asked, "Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?" The data reveal that Truman students are falling behind in having meaningful opportunities, such as cooperative experiences or clinical assignments (Gillette et al, 2005). Furthermore, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) conducted a faculty survey in 2004 regarding methods used in courses taught. "Community service as part of coursework" is employed by only 3.5 percent, a noticeable gap from the public four-year universities' 7.2 percent (Gillette et al, 2005). This data beg the following question: What can faculty do to encourage learning and research that benefits both the practitioner and the community at large?

It is precisely for this reason that students hope to see service learning, as one of the Four Powerful Pedagogies, become a familiar experience in the curriculum. The Vice President of Academic Affairs has adopted a definition, used by the American Association for Higher Education, which unifies the broad parameters of this pedagogy.

Service-learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience (Zlotkowski et al, 1997-2000).

These service learning courses will provide opportunities, whether through a journal, diary, or more formal research paper, for students to reflect on the connect or disconnect between their own service experiences and the concepts taught in the class. Just as importantly, the students can reflect on their own assumptions and prejudices about the world in light of what they had seen, heard, and felt in their service experiences. For many students, service learning is an eye-opening experience, sometimes even leading to what sociologists call a "repositioning" of one's own place in the social matrix. James Ostrow writes that service learning is as much an experience of the "self" as it is of the "others" (1995, 357-375).

#### 4. Study Abroad

The study abroad program represents the commitment of Truman State University students, faculty, and staff to the value of diverse and challenging off-campus learning experiences as more than five hundred Truman students study abroad in over fifty countries each semester (Truman State University Office of Admission, 2006). Truman State University is committed to "the continual development of its liberal arts culture and the living/learning environment of its students by enhancing the participation of Truman students in out-of-classroom and off campus experiences such as study abroad" (McManis et al, 1997). This commitment must be reflected through constant evaluation and improvement of study abroad experiences. According to the 2005 results of the National Survey of Student Engagement, fifty-three percent of freshmen at Truman plan to study abroad. However, when seniors were asked the same question, only twenty-five percent reported studying abroad during their college careers (Gillette et al, 2005). In the Fall 2005 Student Senate Study Abroad Survey, over seventy-five percent of the 1520 students surveyed were either very interested or somewhat interested in a study abroad experience. It is important to make this experience available to all interested students.

The study abroad experience should not be blemished by problems that could be prevented



with adequate information. Extended program descriptions would be a step towards this goal. Such descriptions should include such information as geographical and cultural data, living arrangements, responses from students who have participated in this program in the past, and sample course listings accompanied by information about transferring credits. Students can also greatly benefit from learning about past students' experiences. A compilation of student study abroad journals should be published and made available to all students.

While study abroad is an experience in which many students are interested, it is also an experience that many students do not seriously consider for logistical reasons. The study abroad program should be made more accessible for all students. As a result, it is essential that students receive as much information about studying abroad during their first year at the University. This work must be done at the division level, the university level, and the international level.

At the division level, curriculum should be made more flexible to allow students to include study abroad in their four-year plan. Currently, many students immediately dismiss the possibility of study abroad because they do not want the experience to delay their graduation date. In the Student Senate Study Abroad Survey, over half of the students indicated that they did not plan on studying abroad because it would disrupt their four year plan. This is a problem that should be addressed. For some majors, this will require restructuring the curriculum to allow for off-campus learning experiences. For other majors, this will only require increased planning on the part of the student. More discussion of the study abroad program should occur during Truman Week and the students' first semester at Truman so that students have sufficient time to plan their study abroad experience. To also help with the planning process, there should be at least one faculty member within each discipline who is available to provide suggestions and guidance for students interested in study abroad.

Changes can also be made at the university level to make study abroad more accessible for all students. Improved communication between the different offices on campus would save students time and confusion before, during, and after a study abroad experience. Similar to the plan of divisions discussed above, at least one staff member in the Financial Aid Office, Registrar's Office, and Residence Life Office should specialize in studying abroad. This is the staff member who would handle all paperwork and student questions regarding study abroad. This staff member would also be in frequent contact with the Center for International Education about changes and updates in the study abroad process. Not only would this plan increase communication and efficiency in the study abroad process, it would also reduce confusion for the student. It would ensure that all student concerns or questions would be addressed with consistent, accurate information.

One of the biggest concerns for students interested in study abroad is the financial costs. According to the Student Senate Study Abroad Survey, over half of the students indicated that they did not think they could afford to study abroad. At the university level, more study abroad scholarships should be available to Truman students. Many students immediately dismiss the possibility of a study abroad experience because of the expense. Increased scholarship possibilities could allow more students to consider a study abroad experience.

The effort to make study abroad more accessible to all students even extends to the international level. Communication should be improved between Truman State University and universities overseas with study abroad or exchange programs. While each individual student is expected to do independent research for his or her study abroad experience, the student should be able to rely on the Center for International Education for consistent, accurate, and updated information regarding programs at overseas universities. The possibility to learn from other cultures and environments does not only apply at the international level. Exchange programs at universities



within the United States can also be very beneficial to students. Truman students should have the possibility to spend a semester or summer studying at another American university. Such a program would give students increased exposure to new learning styles, research possibilities, or programs.

The University should also work to increase recognition of study abroad as a part of the liberal arts education. According to the University's mission, "the highest goals of a liberal arts education are to ignite the individual's curiosity about the natural and social universe and then aid him or her in developing the skills and personal resources to channel knowledge into productive, satisfying activity." The ideals of a liberal arts education revolve around looking at the world in new and different ways. The study abroad program encourages this kind of thought through immersion in a completely different environment and culture. When students step aside from the familiar and comfortable, they expand their knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of the world. The role that this kind of experience plays in a liberal arts education should be emphasized by the University. The Center for International Education should encourage more faculty members to plan and lead these programs. Students must also understand how study abroad experiences put the liberal arts ideals into practice. The General Catalog should include an explanation of how study abroad courses can fulfill major, minor, and Liberal Studies Program requirements. The Center for International Education should also sponsor an awareness campaign to attract non-foreign language majors to the Study Abroad Program. The experience of study abroad should be just as accessible to a physics major or a sociology major as it is to a French or German major. These efforts will all combine to increase the role of study abroad in the liberal arts program and to make study abroad more accessible to all Truman students.

### *Majors and Minors*

The students' position is that majors should be an important, but not encompassing, aspect of the Truman education. This means that majors that impose eighty credit hour requirements on their students should be admonished, and a significant effort should be put forth to realize how this course burden can be lessened. Such a large burden within the major creates unnecessary burdens on the students and prohibits them from exploring outside of their major field of study. We understand the need for faculty and the University to provide students with a strong education within their chosen field of study. However, we strongly believe that this should be done in no more than sixty credit hours, with the preferential arrangement being one that has forty hours of an LSP model, forty hours of major coursework, and forty hours being devoted to electives.

Minors currently do not have significant importance at Truman, although Truman should be commended for adding several additional minors in the past several years. We encourage the University in the future to list minors on degrees as a way to acknowledge the work that students have completed in a concerted manner.

### *Faculty Evaluations*

Both students and faculty have embraced assessment as a way to grow at this institution. However, in recent years, students have become concerned that the massive amount of assessment data currently being gathered is not being used. This is especially true in the case of faculty evaluations. It is the belief of students that this data is not overtly used in the assessment of promotion and tenure decisions and, if anything, may serve as icing on the cake if the evaluations are good. One accounting major notes this in the 2004 portfolio project:

My experience here at Truman has been wonderful and terrible at the same time. I have met and learned from true teachers here who care about students as people . . .



I have learned even more (unfortunately) about teachers who think the classroom is an open forum for them to preach about life . . . This teacher is different from the teachers that I have encountered that do not THINK they know everything, they KNOW they know everything. This makes for an interesting day when you do not understand something, and they make you feel like the smallest person in the world as they sigh because they are answering another one of your questions.

I did not write this paragraph to complain. On the contrary, from an overall prospective, I have enjoyed my experience here at Truman. What I seek to do is inform and correct. I want the school to know that they have not hired the best faculty in many positions. More importantly, I wish that for once in my life, I would be heard, and the students here would be heard. READ TEACHER EVALUATIONS EVERY SEMESTER. I have read the teacher evaluation paragraphs that say that the division head looks at them. However, I hope that they do not because if they have been ignoring me and hundreds of other students over the years, there is a much bigger problem. We are competent, smart, honest university students. If there are several negative teacher recommendations in a particular teacher's file, there should be action taken to improve. However, over the last four years, I have not seen much change among the faculty possibly because of the ever popular line, 'they have tenure.' (Woehlk, XIII-25)

It is the hope of the students that by placing this quote in this Vision Document, students such this one can finally be heard. Evaluations will then take their rightful place in faculty assessment that they are promised to have by the University.

### *First Year Experience (FYE)*

The first year (FY) is a critical time for both students and the University. Students must quickly acclimate to a new environment that is often far away from home (90.7 percent of first-year students report being more than 100 miles away from home) and many leave friends behind (Woehlk 2004, V-15). They also are in a period of redefining who they are as individuals and who they want to be in the future as professionals. Ergo, a very formative environment exists for students when they enter college. It is important for the University to instill our mission and values in each student and to help him or her succeed during his or her first year. Much of the University's success in this area is measured in retention data, which show that Truman retains approximately eighty-four percent of our FY students (Romine & O'Brien, Public Presentation, 30 Oct 2005). While this number is commendable and the highest in the state (the University of Missouri-Columbia and Rolla campuses also share this rate of retention), we should strive to do better. It is the belief of the students that through a successful reassessment and limited restructuring of the First Year Experience that Truman can retain more students and ensure that the transition period for students will be smooth and allow for the exploration they deserve.

In the fall of 2004, President Dixon announced she was creating a college task force on the First Year Experience. This task force has been meeting since the spring of 2005 and is scheduled to give its report to the President by March 2006.

According to an October 30, 2005 presentation to Student Senate by co-chairs Andrea O'Brien and Jeff Romine, one of the first findings of the taskforce was that Truman does not have a list of goals and/or learning objectives that cover the entire first year experience. In response to that finding, the FYE taskforce created a list of "first steps" in order to have parameters by which



to conduct assessment and to identify goals that the taskforce was aspiring to fulfill. The taskforce has since given the information to Undergraduate Council and Faculty Senate and has given latitude to Undergraduate Council and Faculty Senate to either use the "first steps" or create other outcomes statements for the FYE. The students strongly endorse the six initial steps that were outlined in the October 30, 2005 presentation and encourage faculty governance to endorse them as reported and not make changes. Each of these outcomes was evaluated heavily in the deliberations of the taskforce and was found repeatedly in the work of the taskforce to be the essential elements of a successful FYE.

The six steps that we endorse are:

- 1) Students need to have positive experiences with members of the Truman community and learn the skills necessary to be responsible [citizens] within the Truman community,
- 2) Students need opportunities to interact meaningfully with those who are different and reflect upon these interactions,
- 3) Students need opportunities for self-exploration and role taking within a supportive and reflective environment,
- 4) Students need to develop confidence in their cognitive abilities and potential to succeed academically,
- 5) Students need information regarding principles of a healthy lifestyle and available university resources as well as support for making a successful transition to the college environment and independent living, and
- 6) Students need to understand how a liberal arts and sciences education differs from other educational philosophies and recognize how their in-class and out-of-class activities may contribute to the achievement of the unique outcomes associated with a public liberal arts education (Romine & O'Brien, Public Presentation, 30 Oct 2005).

As of this writing, the taskforce is reporting the data of an environmental scan of peer institutions with high retention levels. Some common themes have emerged in these findings that the students believe would enhance and improve the FYE. The following are recommendations we endorse and urge the taskforce and the University to endorse as well:

- 1) FINS: This course is modeled after many of the universities, which have been researched by the taskforce (for more information, see the LSP section). It is also a great way to introduce the students to the University because all first-year students, regardless of whether or not they have declared a major, would take this course.
- 2) Rigor with support: While Truman must maintain a rigorous environment to ensure quality teaching and to help our students become nationally recognized in their capabilities, it is also necessary to support them when they fall. Every Truman student should experience at least some weakness while in college (this could be as subtle as receiving a B in a class). Many students are not prepared for such a realization because they come from schools where they were the best of the best. Thus, it is necessary to provide support services through a "success center" or "support center" that assists the student in avoiding failure or rebuilding and learning after failing, rather than allowing him or her to collapse, something which often results in students transferring to another institution.
- 3) Summer orientation: Truman students and their parents should be invited to



- campus on one of several weekends where they would be given a detailed tour of campus and first year students would register for their first semester's classes. This model gives students the opportunity to register for classes and keeps with the theme of Curriculum Goal 3, creating student initiative. Parents should be given an introduction to the college environment and developmental concerns that can come with such an environment. This orientation should replace the orientation for parents during Truman Week.
- 4) Interest-based advising: Faculty advisors should be assigned to Truman students prior to arriving on campus for Truman Week. The assignments should be based on a faculty/student questionnaire that seeks to match the student with a faculty member who shares at least some of the student's interests. The RCP advisors should also take this survey and an attempt should be made to assign those advisors accordingly. First year students should be given a RCP advisor and a faculty co-advisor upon entering Truman.
  - 5) FYE Website: This website should be for accepted first-year students and would be based on a "University 101" curriculum approach by providing essential items of interest to students about university life or practices at Truman. It should also contain an open forum for them to discuss fears, questions, interests, and other items with fellow FY students, faculty, staff, and select current students.
  - 6) Summer reading: The FINS course should require that one book be read during the summer in preparation for Truman Week. Students would then write about the book and make a presentation during Truman Week.
  - 7) Truman Week: This should consist of a FINS course, a limited University 101 course, and a significant period of recreational activities. The current division day activities should be replaced by the FINS courses; however, faculty from multiple divisions should be involved in a recreational activity during Truman Week with each FINS course. The students should also engage in a service-learning project during Truman Week that introduces them to different aspects of the Kirksville community.
  - 8) Transfer Students: All transfer students should be afforded the opportunity to take Truman Week and FINS. The same charges for Truman Week should then apply to the transfer students.
  - 9) Reporting Structure: The students encourage the University to place responsibility for the First Year Experience under the Dean of the Residential College Program. That person should report to both the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of Student Affairs. That person should also be given the authority of an academic dean to select faculty to teach each of the FINS courses.
  - 10) Resources: Many of the suggestions listed currently exist and are modifications of current programs (Truman Week, Summer Reading, and FYE Website). Others will take a commitment by the University, such as the creation of a success center and implementation of a FINS program. The University will have to make a monetary commitment to the facility space and material needs.

These recommendations are sought to enhance the FYE, not to eliminate the good things we have been doing in our current FYE. Many of the presenters that came before the taskforce showed unique ideas that certainly foster a sense of attachment and belonging for FY students here at Truman. These recommendations are founded through correlations in the environmental



scan and address some of the concern areas that have been identified by the FYE taskforce. The students thank the taskforce for their work as they have passionately opened their minds to new ideas and accepted a calling for change not only in the context of the FY environment, but also the University as a whole. The entire University community must adopt this mindset if we are to truly become a nationally renowned liberal arts and sciences university.

## *Scholarships*

Empirical data consistently show that one of the reasons students come to the University is due to the generous scholarship program. When almost seven hundred students were asked why they came to Truman, over one-third replied that scholarships were a major draw of the University (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). In early 2005, the President formed a committee to investigate the University's scholarship program. The committee came to two major conclusions:

- 1) That the GPA requirement needed to be more flexible, and
- 2) That the scholarship work requirement should be a scholarship work experience.

These two conclusions resulted in reforms by the President:

- 1) A percentage based sliding scale for those who do not reach the 3.25 GPA required for scholarship renewal, and
- 2) An increase in the dollar amount students receive before being required to fulfill a work requirement.

Both of these reforms to the scholarship program were essential to better provide for the students' needs. This committee represents one of the many progressive committees that have been formed by the President to address serious reforms in our campus community.

These two reforms are only a start. Review of the scholarship work requirement should be continued. This program was originally formed to provide students with valuable work experience that would translate into better understanding of the real world. The scholarship work requirement, however, has deteriorated into a simple free labor program, with students rarely having an opportunity to interact with faculty and even less often gaining truly valuable work experiences. This program is one that has the potential to help students have internship experiences without leaving campus. Any program that emphasizes development is a program that could truly set Truman apart from other schools, while also providing students a connection to the campus and Kirksville communities.



## CHAPTER 2

# ADVISING

### *Residential College Program (RCP) Advising*

**A**t the beginning of his or her first year at Truman, a student is assigned to a Residential College Program (RCP) advisor. This person is a trained, professional academic advisor and is housed in the student's residence hall. Students keep this advisor for between one and four years, depending on their chosen major. A chart listing the transition time to a major advisor is listed later in this section.

According to the 2004 Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ), students rate RCP advising at 2.72 on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied) (Gillette et al, 2005). Data from the 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) state that first year students are generally more satisfied with their academic advising than are graduating students. First year students rank advising at 3.01 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent), while graduating students rank their advising at 2.78 (Gillette et al, 2005). All of these ratings are substantially lower than the University's peer institutions.

A student's first year at Truman is by far one of the most crucial years for that student. It is a time when a lot of life-changing decisions are made, and an academic advisor can provide support for some of these decisions. For that reason, students should feel far more comfortable with their advisors in their first year so that they can get the proper help they need. To help students receive better advising in their first year, we recommend that a new system of advising should be implemented during a student's first year at Truman.

### *Faculty Advising*

An integral part of the liberal arts and sciences culture is the interaction that takes place between students and faculty. These relationships help students develop into mature, responsible adults with an appreciation for a liberal education—but only if students and faculty actively work to establish this type of relationship.

A university's culture can either foster or discourage healthy and meaningful student/faculty relationships. Academic advising, as currently practiced by this university, does not fulfill the University's goal of enriching "each student's intellectual and social experience through the support of an advisor and mentors who are committed and prepared to cultivate and facilitate student growth and development" (McManis et al, 1997).

The current faculty advising structure varies greatly across academic disciplines. All first-year students have an advisor within the Residential College Program (RCP), but students in different majors change from RCP advisors to major advisors at different points in time.

After a forum on academic advising with more than thirty students in attendance and results from surveys conducted by Dr. Scott Alberts's Fall 2005 Statistics 376 class, we are able to draw several conclusions for these low ratings of academic advising. First, some advisors view themselves and are viewed by students solely as distributors of the Registration Access Code (RAC). Second, advising has become a system of merely processing the requirements for graduation. Advising has become less about meaningful conversations about out-of-class opportunities, quality of classes and class work, the value of a liberal arts education, after college goals, and life experience and is more



about taking the minimum class requirements that will allow students to graduate in the shortest period of time and with the least exploration. A third conclusion is that advisors do not have a clear understanding of curriculum outside of their own discipline; this is not only important due to the high number of double majors at the University, but also because as students of a liberal arts university, we should be encouraged to explore classes that may interest us outside of our LSP and major coursework. Finally, advisors do not often help students understand, appreciate, and make connections between the LSP and a liberal arts education.

### *Proposed Changes*

To answer these concerns, we propose a number of goals for academic advising at Truman. In proposing these goals we hope to move Truman further along in the direction of a liberal arts and sciences university. A key aspect of the liberal free ideal of a liberal arts education is an emphasis on individual freedom. In his book *Orators and Philosophers*, Bruce Kimball discusses the contributions faculty make in a student's quest for knowledge: "Contributing to this ethic of individualism, Locke, in his writings on education, stressed each child's personal nature, to which the teacher is to respond in order to awaken motivation to learn, rather than resorting to compulsion" (Kimball, 1986, 122). We want to see more student initiative in academic advising practices.

All steps must be taken to ensure that RCP advisors truly engage their advisees. This is a great concern because each advisor has such a large number of students to advise. RCP advisors already do an outstanding job with the "technical" aspects of advising, such as ensuring advisees fulfill LSP and essential skills requirements, but are not as knowledgeable about each major. As a result, it is essential for students to take the initiative and make connections with faculty members as soon as possible. The role of the RCP advisor should be to help acclimate first-year students to the campus community and the general academic requirements.

Students should receive a major advisor as soon as possible, preferably after a student's first year at Truman. Students in majors with larger FTE ratios, such as business, accounting, and psychology, currently do not receive a major advisor until the beginning of their third year. Lacking an advisor who is truly knowledgeable in a student's selected major(s) may mean the student will miss potential research, internship, and networking opportunities that are so essential to the Truman experience. Students in less populous majors already receive that benefit, but this should be extended to all students.

Perhaps students view faculty advisors as the distributor of the RAC because that is only reason why students are required to visit their advisors each semester. By encouraging more student initiative in the advising process, we believe that students will take a more active interest in their own education and move even closer to the idea of truly learning for the sake of learning. Kimball discusses this aspect of a liberal arts education when states, "Freedom of intellect realized in the pursuit of knowledge becomes a goal that is sought for its own sake. Since conclusions are always subject to criticism, it is not the truth that is finally desirable, but the search" (Kimball, 1986, 122). The University can be proud of its many students who love learning, but we feel that more can be done to encourage such a passion for knowledge in even more students.

One way of doing this would be through a system of professional advisors and faculty mentors that would serve each student throughout his or her time at the University. Professional advisors would be available to students as distributors of the RAC and to make sure all the requirements are fulfilled so students can graduate. This would allow faculty to mentor students instead of fulfilling the more technical roles of advising. Students would seek out their faculty mentors to engage in discussions about out-of-class experiences and opportunities, future plans, and graduate school and career goals.



*Affirming the Promise* states that “students should be encouraged to make intentional connections between their academic/career goals and their co-curricular participation to foster and enhance synergy in the development of both personal and intellectual competencies” (McManis et al, 1997). One of Truman’s current weaknesses is the students’ inability to synthesize their coursework with real life experiences—a skill essential to the growth and development of a student of the liberal arts. This system of faculty mentors would better promote discussions to help students make these connections in a meaningful way. Certain students, including McNair and Pershing Scholars, already have faculty mentors in addition to their academic advisors, and these programs have been extremely successful. This system should be offered to all students.

The current method of assigning students to faculty advisors is somewhat arbitrary. A key component of a faculty mentor program would be assignments based on a student’s interest areas. *Affirming the Promise* calls on faculty to “aggressively [support] University retention efforts by fostering increased opportunities for close student/faculty interactions” (McManis et al, 1997). A conscious effort must be made to ensure that students are engaged, learning, and constantly searching while they are here, and these activities are much more likely to occur if both the faculty mentor and the student are provided with an opportunity to take an active interest in learning from one another.

As students of a liberal arts and sciences institution, one of our top priorities should be to seek understanding of and appreciation for what a liberal arts education strives to accomplish. Our journey toward such an understanding and appreciation should start with role models who can teach and lead by example. One of Truman’s goals is to employ faculty and staff who “appropriately model the active scholar and the life-long learner in their personal and professional lives, and who understand and support the institution’s liberal arts and sciences mission” (McManis et al, 1997). While our outstanding faculty, staff, and administration often embody all the exceptional qualities of liberally educated individuals, their role as instillers of these same qualities in the students at this university has often been downplayed. A system of faculty mentoring will provide numerous meaningful opportunities to work one-on-one with students who are growing intellectually and need encouragement in their search for meaning in a liberal arts education.



## CHAPTER 3

# STUDENT SERVICES

### *Athletics*

The athletic department at Truman is a shining image of excellence at our University. We do not have to look far to see our five national championship banners in the natatorium; nor do we overlook the fact that our soccer teams annually compete for national championships, that our athletes have brought home national titles in track and wrestling, and that our volleyball team has continually been ranked in the top five during their seasons and have won our conference repeatedly. Truman's athletic program as a whole was recently ranked third in NCAA Division II and 40th among all universities by the National Collegiate Scouting Association. Currently, Truman offers 21 different intercollegiate athletic teams, which is considerably more than many other public universities in the Midwest.

The biggest question that circles the athletic department in discussion is whether Truman has too many sports. It is the belief of the students that all 21 sports should stay at Truman. Intercollegiate athletics provide a set of experiences that can enrich leadership, learning, and cooperation. Thus, having a multitude of sports in which to participate allows many students to gain these traits. It also seems compatible to a liberal arts university to have a broad range of opportunities availed to its students in terms of sports. As we offer a diverse array of academic courses, we should also offer a diverse array of sporting options to students who wish to enrich themselves in the principles that are gained through intercollegiate athletics.

A constant complaint that is heard from athletics is a need for facility enhancement. Our facilities are showing their age, but interestingly 81.7 percent of students report on the 2005 GSQ that they are at least satisfied with the athletic facilities (Gillette et al, 2005). We raise some questions about the validity of this question, however, because many students, particularly those who do not compete on the intercollegiate level, may view this question to include the Student Recreation Center. The administration should continually encourage the state to appropriate a capital expenditure for the gymnasium and natatorium in the future. This is dually used as athletic and academic space and the state should shoulder some of the responsibility for its maintenance.

The University should work to build funds through the capital campaign to install of artificial turf and new lights on the football field, which would enable more use by the football team as well as by other varsity and recreational programs. The light standards at Stokes Stadium should also be removed as the current lighting system has not worked for a number of years.

### *Technology*

During the past fifteen years, technology has played an increasingly important role in a liberal education. Upon graduation, students are expected to have "command of essential intellectual skills," one of which is computer literacy (McManis et al, 1997). It is imperative for students to be able to use cutting-edge technology at Truman; as a result, Truman's technological assets must be state-of-the-art.



## *Information Technology Services (ITS)*

ITS already does an outstanding job of maintaining the current campus network, as well as going above and beyond the call of duty whenever possible. Some examples of this include having Help Desk hours during the late evening hours and fixing student computers when they are not obligated to do so. Most student complaints about ITS boil down to one topic: communication.

ITS already holds weekly "Tech Breaks" for students, faculty, and other members of the campus community. However, the timing of these forums (late on Friday afternoons) is not conducive to high student attendance. To this end, ITS is considering holding forums and educational sessions in the residence halls, especially toward the beginning of the academic year. Another strong step in communication would be to completely revamp the website and add a newsletter to help inform students about their future plans.

Currently, approximately eighty-three percent of all students are either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall performance of ITS (Spring 2005 ITS Student Survey). With better communication and continued strong service, more students would approve of ITS's performance in the future.

## *TruView and Related Services*

All technology services on campus are directed by or coordinated with Information Technology Services (ITS). The most basic use of campus technology is being able to access campus e-mail and other student services. Although TruView is a vast improvement over the prior Campus Pipeline system, the occasional network outage can wreak havoc for students. Student e-mail services, Blackboard, and Banner Web Services can be accessed without entering via TruView, but few know how to access these essential services if TruView is unavailable.

During the past two years, several other student concerns have come to light about TruView. Although the capacity of the network has increased during the past several years, Banner Web Services, which is linked from TruView for the vast majority of students, still struggles to handle periods of high usage, such as class registration periods and grade availability. One student commented, "When we try to register, the system is extremely slow. And on occasion, I have had trouble accessing my email because the system is so slow" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). Information Technology Services produced a student technology survey during the spring of 2005 which found that 25.5 percent of all students surveyed were either minimally satisfied or dissatisfied with the online registration process. Another common student concern is about having to log onto Blackboard after already logging onto TruView, something which was not addressed when TruView was implemented in the fall of 2004 (Nwazota et al, 2004).

One of the technological goals from *Affirming the Promise* was to "provide incentives and increased access to appropriate opportunities for faculty to integrate new technologies into their courses" (McManis et al, 1997). However, a significant number of faculty members at Truman do not use all of Blackboard's capabilities. According to ITS's spring 2005 faculty technology survey, approximately 35 percent of all faculty members do not use Blackboard at all. This represents a significant portion of faculty members who are not using Truman's technological resources to the fullest of its abilities. Likewise, almost one-sixth of students rarely or never use Blackboard. Some services that students frequently request, such as up-to-date assignment lists and grades, are provided by very few faculty members. One of the most common requests of faculty members on the ITS survey was for training in the Blackboard system. If provided, such training would help foment student-faculty communication on the Truman network.



## *Wired and Wireless Networks*

During the past several years, Truman's wired network has reached across all of campus and into practically every classroom. It is nearly impossible to walk through an academic building or a residence hall and not notice the bevy of Ethernet ports in convenient locations. The wired network is much more stable and reliable than it was even two or three years ago. The primary student concern regarding the wired network is the amount of bandwidth available at peak times. One student expressed concern that "additional network bandwidth and reliability is needed. I notice almost daily massive lag spikes and slowdowns due to the restrictions placed on internet traffic. This makes some programs and some useful tools basically useless" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). With approximately ninety-five percent of students bringing a computer to campus, ITS must take care to expand the bandwidth as needed.

As important as the wired network is at this point in time, it is quite likely that the wireless network will be the primary network in the not too distant future. The current wireless network is in its infancy, only being accessible in some areas of campus. The current wireless network is available in the lounges of Centennial and Ryle Halls, Pickler Memorial Library, the Student Union Building, the Quadrangle and the Mall, and much of McClain and Violette Halls.

In the next year or two, ITS is scheduled to expand the wireless network to a larger area of campus. If the entire campus cannot immediately have wireless coverage, it is imperative to ensure that academic buildings first get wireless access. Since forty-six percent of students have laptop computers, expanding the wireless network to all academic buildings would greatly benefit the learning process (Spring 2005 ITS Student Survey). After all academic buildings have wireless capability, residence halls can be added to the network. In the meantime, however, the current wired network is sufficient.

## *Virus Protection*

The Truman network has been crippled by large-scale virus outbreaks several times in recent memory. The most damaging of those outbreaks was in late August 2003, which forced the e-mail system to shut down almost fifteen percent of the month due to the infamous Blaster virus (ITS Network Up Times).

ITS has recently taken steps to ensure that the network will not be down for such an extended period of time. Currently, Truman provides the McAfee antivirus program free of charge to all students. However, many students do not know how to keep their systems free of viruses and malicious spyware programs. As a result, the Truman network gets an overload of viruses every time students take their computers home during a break in classes.

During the summer of 2005, ITS purchased a program called Cisco Clean Access Agent to enforce network standards and reduce the likelihood of damaging virus outbreaks on the Truman network. The decision was made late in the summer and was not communicated to most students due to the timing of the purchase. The first several weeks of the Fall 2005 semester were rife with complaints about Clean Access and how many students were unable to access the Internet from residence halls because of the program.

It would be beneficial for ITS to provide more information about antivirus programs and Clean Access. Most of the student complaints regarding Clean Access were because students did not understand the purpose of the program and how to use it. As a result, ITS has had a much higher number of work order tickets and calls to the Help Desk than in previous years. An education program would greatly benefit students while decreasing ITS's workload.



## *Computer Labs and Hours*

Currently, there are approximately 250 on-campus computers available for student use and maintained by ITS, the vast majority of which are personal computers with a Windows XP operating system. Approximately two-thirds of these computers are located in Pickler Memorial Library and Violette Hall. There are also small computer labs located in each residence hall.

One of the most common concerns expressed by students is the lack of a 24-hour computer lab for students who do not live in the residence halls. Network usage is often highest in the period between ten P. M. and two A. M., but no lab is open to all students between those hours. With faculty members requiring students to use specialized programs that can only be found in the campus computer labs, there must be twenty-four hour availability of these programs on Sunday through Thursday nights. With the renovation of the Student Union Building, that is a possible location for a twenty-four hour computer lab. Otherwise, the lab in Violette Hall would be a logical location. The biggest concern with such a lab would be staffing during the wee hours of the morning. A professional staffer may need to be hired to manage the lab late at night. It is also essential that a diverse range of operating systems be included in this lab.

## *Printers and Scanners*

Another area of student dissatisfaction with ITS is with printing in on-campus computer labs. Twenty-three percent of students who use black-and-white printing are either minimally satisfied or dissatisfied with those services and thirty-eight percent of students who use color printing are equally disgruntled (Spring 2005 ITS Student Survey). Much of the dissatisfaction stems from the quality of the printers and the amount of time that the printers do not work.

The printers, especially those in the residence halls, are maintained by the hall desk workers and rarely maintained by ITS. The printers are often out of toner or paper and the printing quality is seldom suitable for academic papers. As a result, students are forced to waste a substantial portion of their printing monies on printouts which they cannot use. There are also not enough color printers available for student printing, especially in the residence halls. One student "needed to have power point slides printed in color for a research conference and went to campus to print them to find out that the color printers were broken, and that on top of that there are only 2. That is ridiculous. With the amount of money I pay to go here, I should be able to print in color anything anytime I need to. Please get more WORKING color printers on campus" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey).

The number of scanners on campus is often mentioned by students. There are currently only three scanners on campus, two of which are in Pickler Memorial Library and one in Violette Hall. Given the heavy usage of the scanners, it would be beneficial to add a scanner to Pickler and the computer lab in Violette Hall.

## *Network Drives*

Truman provides each student with twenty-five megabytes of web space (the T drive) and twenty-five megabytes of file space (the Y drive). Students can request that ITS expand both drives to 100 megabytes. With the large multimedia files that are so essential for today's presentations, twenty-five megabytes represents only a few large files. Since many students reach these limits and are not aware of the ability to obtain more space on the network drives, it is imperative that ITS increase all students' network drive capacities, especially the Y drive.



## *Student Computers*

As of spring 2005, 95.31 percent of Truman students own a personal computer, a number that will likely increase during the coming years (Spring 2005 Student Information Technology Survey). Some of these computers are brand new, purchased just before the student matriculates at Truman. Others are several years of age and barely meet today's software and hardware needs. As a result, it is essential that ITS maintains computer support for as long as may be practical for each operating system.

An increasing number of campus computer users are using non-Windows operating systems, something which will likely continue to increase in the coming years. Many of the users of alternative operating systems do not feel supported by ITS. As a result, there should be more instructions and support available for Linux, Unix, and Macintosh operating systems.

There has been some discussion about requiring incoming students to purchase a specific desktop or laptop computer. Some universities, including Northwest Missouri State University, have had such programs for the past several years. The largest benefit of this program would be to simplify service and maintenance on these computers while keeping costs down for students. However, a large number of students do decide where they will go to college at the last minute and have already purchased computers before choosing to go to Truman. Because of that, it would be in the best interest of Truman students to not require that a certain type of computer be purchased by all students due to cost concerns and personal choice.

Another key student concern is about Truman's ability to block access to certain Internet websites through various filters. Students have expressed concern over not being able to view certain news and information sites, especially those from other nations. It is also a key tenet of student rights to be able to access the entire Internet without any questions asked. Truman students are legal adults and should be responsible for their own actions.

## *Food Service*

Students, whether they live off or on campus, eat in the dining halls and the Student Union Building, or grab a quick meal from the convenience store. Sodexo has done an amazing job providing food services to Truman State University. With their contract coming to an end in 2006, the students would like a continuance of their food service contract. While students are happy as a whole with the food service available, there are some areas of dissatisfaction which need to be addressed.

The problem that is the most significant with the students is the current rule that meal blocks and Dining Dollars may not be used during the time between 11:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. in the Student Union Building. The justification given for such a rule is to allow faculty and staff to purchase food in the Student Union Building during those times without excess student traffic. However, since its construction in 1967, the Student Union Building has been a center point for student involvement, student activities, and student gatherings. Moreover, this policy is an inconvenience for the students in a time period where many students eat lunch. The only result of the policy is that Mainstreet Market gets clogged around 12:15 as every student waits to pay with meal blocks or Dining Dollars. Faculty and staff know to avoid this period of time and Sodexo sells little food during the blackout period. Therefore, we urge that the 11:30-12:30 blackout policy be repealed.

Students are also concerned about the availability of on-campus dining at certain hours. Currently, the dining halls and the food services in the Student Union Building are only open during specific times. With the closing of dining halls during the next several years, extending the dining hours is essential to minimizing student traffic during peak periods. Another option is to



keep the dining halls open from the start of breakfast until the end of dinner. This would give students the freedom to go in and eat when they please, also reducing traffic. Mainstreet Market must also have longer hours because many students prefer eating there versus one of the dining halls. Sodexo and the University must extend the dining options available on-campus, especially on nights and weekends.

### *Career Center*

The Career Center is an integral part of Truman State University. It functions as an aide to undergraduates looking for internships and summer work, and assists in placing our graduates into career or graduate programs. The Career Center also offers assistance to students in finding internships and summer work opportunities as well. Students reported a mean 2.89 satisfaction level in the 2004 GSQ data (with 1 being very dissatisfied and 4 being very satisfied), showing some level of dissatisfaction with the services offered. It seems that much of the current dissatisfaction stems from a lack of awareness of the Career Center's services. Most anecdotes that have been received concerning this department show a high level of satisfaction if the student utilized the services. Therefore, our first suggestion for the Career Center is to continue its education and awareness programs in order to further entice students to use the available services.

The second area in which the students would like to see the Career Center expand is with regard to networking. Networking has become a buzzword among corporations, the government, and graduate schools. It is becoming increasingly essential for students to build contacts during their undergraduate experiences so they can advance in the future. This goes back to the call earlier in this document of having each student complete one of the "four powerful pedagogies." Each of these pedagogies enables the student to gain some networking contacts.

The Career Center needs to be the primary vehicle of the University to foster these opportunities for Truman students. These opportunities should not be limited to Missouri and the Midwest. It is clear that Truman students desire broader opportunities and are capable of performing admirably as interns, researchers, and employees at the top institutions in the land. The Career Center should be charged with facilitating opportunities on a large scale for Truman students. This means making connections and contacts with corporations, government agencies, and higher education institutions across the nation. We must provide resources to enable at least one staff member to be placed with the responsibility of acquiring connections across the nation that would enable the placement of Truman students all over the country. Marketing of the Truman product needs to become a mantra of the Career Center. As the Career Center moves forward in this new mission, they should also work hand in hand with the Office of Advancement and the Public Relations Office to build better connections to alumni and friends of the University.

### *SERVE Center*

The SERVE Center acts as a liaison between Truman students and the surrounding Kirksville community, allowing students to become aware of volunteer opportunities available in the community. Similarly, the SERVE Center helps Kirksville agencies find students to help with their events.

The SERVE Center currently maintains a web-based database of volunteer events and information that students can easily access. Approximately 500 individuals and organizations receive a weekly e-mail with service opportunities on campus and throughout the community. The SERVE Center organizes several events throughout the year, such as Bowl for Gold to benefit the Special Olympics, The Big Event, and Martin Luther King Week, and also assists in other service events.



As graduate schools and employers place more importance on graduates who are community-oriented and altruistic, the role of the SERVE Center will continue to increase in importance. The SERVE Center has engaged in some important activities this year that the students would sincerely like to see continued.

The first is the activation of a service coalition. In the fall of 2005, Student Senate suggested to the SERVE Center that they should create a committee consisting of representatives from each on-campus service organization in an effort to promote collaboration on ideas and events. This has come to fruition in the form of a service coalition that sought to provide a forum for service organizations and the philanthropy chairs of other campus organizations to talk about all of the philanthropic opportunities happening on campus and in the Kirksville community.

The second is innovation within their programming. The SERVE Center has suggested holding a service fair where tables would be available for any organization on campus or in the community that wishes to promote a service activity. Students would be invited to tour the various tables where they could learn about the activities and sign up to help if they so desire. Not only would this event be a benefit to the Truman community, but this would also be good way to improve relations with the Kirksville community.

The SERVE Center's largest annual event is The Big Event, which is a spring activity when Truman students complete acts of service for members of the Kirksville community. Because The Big Event in the spring has been so successful, the SERVE Center has considered holding a second Big Event to be scheduled during the fall semester. The fall Big Event would be focused on a theme such as a "SERVE Center Week of Giving." Each day would provide a different opportunity for students to volunteer or give in some way.

The SERVE Center should also continue to be the data collection hub for philanthropic hours conducted by students. This will be a key feature in the new co-curricular records which are being implemented on campus. The SERVE Center is currently having a difficult time implementing this plan because of a lack of staffing. Every effort should be made by the Student Affairs Office to see that philanthropic hours are recorded in a consistent and efficient manner.

## *Health and Counseling Centers*

The University's health and counseling centers play an important role in maintaining the health and well-being of the campus community. However, several developments in recent years have threatened the effectiveness of these vital services. Students must be vigilant to ensure that the health and counseling centers continue to provide quality physical and mental health services.

## *Student Health Center*

The Student Health Center has been an area of student discontent for some time. Students continually report complaints of limited access, lack of confidentiality, and inadequate treatment, even though an in-house survey produced by the Student Health Center states that sixty-five percent of all students who received services reported being at least very satisfied with the services. We have no explanation for this discrepancy. In an effort to improve the Health Center and University Counseling Services, students supported the addition of a \$25 per student fee suggested by the Dean of Student Affairs. With the implementation of this fee, the students desire better accountability in regard to the listed areas of concern. We suggest the following uses of the fee in order to allow the Student Health Center to better serve students.

**Improved Access:** While it is inconceivable that the University could staff a facility that would allow for full access by all students, the students believe that steps could be taken to reduce the demand on the Student Health Center. The biggest is that the University should provide



each student with a copy of the Mayo Clinic Guide to Self-Care. Currently, several students are conducting grant research on these books to look into how they are utilized and have become proficient in teaching their peers how to use the guide. This group should train student advisors in the basic principles of self-care. In turn, the student advisors should instruct first-year students in how to utilize the books. With the emphasis on the usage and utility of the self-health books, the demand on the Health Center could be reduced by making more students rely on self-health rather than the Health Center. The Health Center should be automated, especially in terms of appointments, to ensure that the time of the staff in the health center is most efficiently utilized.

**Greater Confidentiality:** Students have written and reported complaints about the confidentiality of the Student Health Center. The common complaint is that students are asked why they are there when asking for an appointment. This is intolerable, and possibly illegal. All steps should be taken to ensure confidentiality in the Health Center. No student should be asked in a public venue why they are asking for an appointment. Better staff orientation to possible violations of confidentiality must be conducted by the Student Health Center to ensure this protection of information.

**Better Treatment:** The students in no way wish to question the credentials of the staff of the Health Center. Rather, the students have every confidence in the good work that the Health Center does. In the future, however, we would like to see more opportunities for professional development for the Health Center staff in an effort to ensure the best and most effective treatments for students. It is also the belief of the students that the self-care guides may help improve student satisfaction with the Health Center.

The students believe that the Health Center is an asset to Truman and want to work proactively to address the many issues that students have with the services as they now stand.

### *University Counseling Services*

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a long history of providing outstanding mental health and counseling services to Truman students. In the past several years, however, the demand on UCS has increased substantially due to students being more open to counseling services while funding for additional personnel has not increased accordingly.

Since it is highly unlikely that UCS will receive substantially more funding from the University, all programs currently offered by UCS must be closely examined. Some of the educational programming currently being offered by UCS, such as eating disorder awareness, stress management, and substance abuse awareness, could be offered either by or in conjunction with campus organizations. If properly managed, these peer-led programs could provide the same quality of education while freeing up counselors to see students with immediate problems.

### *Residential College Program (RCP)*

When the Residential College Program (RCP) was initiated almost two decades ago at Truman, it was a drastic departure from the ordinary functions of a dormitory. Rather than just being a place to eat and sleep, the University's residence halls became venues which truly help to further the liberal arts and sciences education and assist in the transition for first-year students from high school to college.

The RCP, often in conjunction with Residence Life, currently provides a wide array of programming in the residence halls that is designed to provide essential out-of-class learning experiences and creates leadership opportunities for on-campus students. It is essential that the RCP include faculty members as much as possible in on-campus activities so students and faculty can build relationships out of the classroom. It is essential that RCP continues to provide these



experiences for the betterment of students. RCP has the potential to be a program that assists in the innovation of our Liberal Arts culture and should be utilized as such.

## *Student Advisors*

The life of a student advisor (SA) is often strenuous and unpredictable. The required activities, such as programming and nights on duty, and other unexpected advising duties lead to frequent late nights and odd sleeping patterns. If there is an emergency in a residence hall, or even a minor incident such as a resident getting locked out of his or her room, it is the SA's duty to respond at any hour of the day or night. These responsibilities make SAs extremely important in the lives of students who reside on campus.

The position of a student advisor is considered a forty-hour-a-week job by the University; as a result, SAs are prohibited from working any other jobs. While the University recognizes the important role SAs fill and the time commitment of the job, it does not go far enough in compensation as to make the position of SA as worthwhile as it should. The tasks and duties of this position merit much more than three-fourths room and board and no guarantee of a single room. In the past several years, Residence Life has faced a dwindling pool of applicants for SA positions as the compensation is not enough to entice students to apply.

This is not the first Vision Document to address the inadequate compensation given to student advisors. Challenges for a New Era stated that "the trade-off in staff privacy and morale made [requiring student advisors to have a roommate] a less-than-optimal policy" (Sifton et al, 1995). After the University chose to do nothing about the compensation given to student advisors, An Education with Character again broached the topic as follows:

Student Advisors in many respects are given an "unfunded" mandate from the University...The amazing individuals that perform as Student Advisors do not ask that much in return for the services that they perform. In fact, they ask for less than what is given at many of our peer institutions. Truman's Student Advisors, in true Truman fashion, only desire the necessary environment to do their job effectively (Rotert et al, 1999).

The working and living conditions for student advisors still have not improved in the past decade, despite repeated calls from students to improve SA compensation. Truman Tomorrow joins the call. Student advisors must receive full room and board in order to attract quality students. Although we do realize that the current renovations will make single rooms for all SAs unfeasible, it is important to allow at least the most senior advisors to have their own room. This would help keep experienced advisors on campus so they can share their wisdom with other students.

## *Student Activities Fee*

The student activities fee is currently \$36.00 per student per semester and generates approximately \$400,000 per year for student organizations. The breakdown in funding is as follows (Kelchen et al, 2005):

Student Activities Board (SAB)	\$17.75 per semester
Collegiate Readership Program	\$9.00 per semester
Funds Allotment Council (FAC)	\$7.25 per semester
Student Senate	\$2.00 per semester

The activities fee was last reviewed in the spring of 2005 and will be next reviewed in the spring of 2008. The Student Activities Fee Review Committee recommended an increase of \$1.72



per semester to the activities fee with \$1.22 going to SAB and \$.50 going to FAC, but a majority of students rejected the fee increase in the April 2005 election.

In a time of increasing fees across the University, it is highly unlikely that students would approve any increases to the student activities fee. As a result, fee-funded organizations need to become increasingly efficient and accountable with student fees. The last review of the fee discovered that financial records did not exist for much of the spending done by these organizations. The lack of recordkeeping prevents students from knowing how their money was spent and decreases the likelihood that funding will increase in the near future.



## CHAPTER 4

# STUDENT FACILITIES AND CAMPUS GROUNDS

### *Academic Facilities*

When prospective students visit Truman the first time, they often comment favorably on the outer façade of the academic facilities. However, a tour of classrooms, laboratories, and other campus facilities reveals another story. Truman's current goal is to "develop and maintain facilities in a planned and coordinated fashion to support existing activities and to accommodate new academic and institutional initiatives" (McManis et al, 1997). It is the opinion of the students that this promise has been severely neglected and that almost every campus building is in desperate need of renovation.

### *Baldwin Hall and Pershing Building*

The two academic facilities which are most desperately in need of repair are Baldwin Hall and Pershing Building. Much of Baldwin Hall is nearly seven decades old and the building is showing its age. Many students expressed their disgust with the condition of the building in the Vision Committee's survey. One student responded, "Baldwin Hall is falling apart. The stairs are awful, display cases are shabby and the classrooms need repair. The auditorium is worse" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). Baldwin Hall and Baldwin Auditorium should be the centerpiece of the University; yet, visitors and prospective students see a dilapidated facility that cannot meet the needs of today's students.

The basement of Baldwin Hall is currently being used for storage by the Division of Fine Arts and the theatre department. Theatre students also use this area as a costume shop and to build sets for productions. It is a dark, dank area where few students venture because of the safety hazards. Electrical boxes are routinely left open and the walls are cracked in numerous locations. No students should have to work in such an unsafe environment.

Although the main floors of Baldwin Hall have seen a fresh coat of paint and new carpeting in the past several years, nothing has been done to ensure the building's structural integrity. The classrooms are ill-suited for modern technology and are not adequately heated and cooled. The majority of campus tours avoid Baldwin Hall classrooms in order to prevent scaring away prospective students; prospective students only see the auditorium and the building's façade.

Baldwin Auditorium is entirely unsuitable for modern theatrical productions and presentations. The University cannot bring many valuable events to campus because of the limited backstage space and production capabilities. Baldwin Auditorium is nearly fifty years old and the infrastructure has fallen into serious disrepair.

Pershing Building is also woefully inadequate for today's educational needs. Home to the health and exercise science division as well as Truman's athletic teams, the fifty-year old facilities face many of the same concerns as Baldwin Hall. Classrooms are cramped and not equipped with modern technology. The large classroom used for the Health and Fitness course (Room 325) is



entirely unsuitable for effectively teaching and engaging up to one hundred students and other classrooms are equally ineffective for smaller classes. The condition of the athletic facilities in Pershing Building is discussed elsewhere in this document.

Ultimately, the state of Missouri should take the responsibility for funding the much-needed renovations of Baldwin Hall and Pershing Building. The state has funded capital improvements for the University on a regular basis, but has not done so in the past several years. The renovations of these two buildings should be Truman's top priority when the state begins to approve capital expenditures for academic facilities.

### *Kirk Building and Kirk Memorial*

Perhaps the two most storied buildings on Truman's campus are the Kirk Building and the Kirk Memorial. The Kirk Building, erected in 1922, is the oldest building on campus and the Kirk Memorial, erected in 1940, was built through alumni, student, and community donations to honor former University President John Kirk. Although the outer beauty of these buildings still remains after many decades, the interiors have long since fallen into an unacceptable state of disrepair. One student commented, "Kirk [Building] and Kirk Memorial should be shut down until repaired. These facilities are not safe for students!" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). The students join this call and urge the University to remove all classes from Kirk Building and Kirk Memorial.

The first floor of the Kirk Building is currently the home to the Student Affairs Office, Media Services, the Center for International Education, the Physical Plant's offices, the ID Office, and television studio. The walls have long since yellowed, paint is peeling from the walls, and the entire hallway formerly known as Sociability Hall is laced with cubicles. The original beauty of the long, graceful hall can be easily imagined, but can no longer be seen amidst all the decay and clutter.

The second and third floors of the Kirk Building are almost completely wasted. Although a smattering of faculty and staff offices can be found hidden away in corners of the building, the main feature of the top two floors is the formerly resplendent Kirk Gym. Originally the home for varsity sports until the completion of Pershing Arena in the late 1950s, the Kirk Gym was used for intramural/recreational sports before the Student Recreation Center was erected in 1997. In the years following the construction of the Student Recreation Center, the Kirk Gym has only been used for institutional storage. A large cage is now located on the basketball court that was used by so many generations of Bulldog athletes. The intimate seating areas and the elegant stage are in deplorable condition, left to rot as the former gymnasium is used as the University's garage.

Much of the third floor of the building has suffered water damage as the roof in Kirk Gym is perilously close to collapsing. In addition, the lone classroom in Kirk Building (Room 304) has a hole in the roof, allowing rain, snow, and sunshine to come directly into the classroom. This also encourages the growth of potentially dangerous mold in the classroom.

The **Kirk Memorial** is in much the same condition as is the Kirk Building. The grand entrance which faces the Quadrangle is both an eyesore and a hazard. The stone steps into the building are cracked and are beginning to disintegrate. Many students have slipped and fallen on the slick steps during inclement weather.

The lower floor of the Kirk Memorial has been vacant since the Violette Museum moved following a small fire in the spring of 2004. The building's restrooms are also located on the lower floor and are in terrible condition. There is also inadequate lighting throughout this floor. The main floor is currently used for various offices and one classroom (Room 204), which does not fit with the history of the building. Professors who are assigned to the one classroom often move their classes outside or to other buildings as it is extremely difficult to hear because of the room's acoustics.



Given that these buildings are mostly not being used for academic pursuits, it seems highly improbable that the state of Missouri would ever grant capital funding to the University for renovating the Kirk Building and the Kirk Memorial. Even if the state were to fund capital improvements at Truman, these buildings should not be at the top of the list. The University must explore other sources of funding for renovating these buildings.

When alumni return to the University, they often lament the fate of these two beautiful, historic buildings. Some even become irate about how the condition of these buildings has been allowed to deteriorate. Since alumni have a stronger connection to the Kirk Building and the Kirk Memorial than do most current students, it seems logical that alumni would be willing to help fund the much-needed renovations. The Kirk Memorial was built through alumni contributions and both buildings which bear his name should be renovated in that spirit.

The Kirk Building should once again become a gathering point on campus. The greatest priority during the renovation process should be the Kirk Gym, both because of its ability to be used by a multitude of student organizations and because alumni would be more willing to fund the gym's renovations than other parts of the building. Care should also be taken to add modern technological and media capabilities to the renovated building to ensure its use by the campus community.

A renovated Kirk Memorial should be used as an alumni center under the Office of Advancement. This would give University fundraising efforts a much more prominent location on campus as well as better utilizing available office space. The main concern with turning the Kirk Memorial into an alumni center is a lack of parking anywhere near the building. In spite of this concern, the University should investigate the feasibility of using the Kirk Memorial as an alumni center.

### *Other Academic Facilities*

Although far from perfect, the rest of the University's academic facilities are in adequate condition. McClain and Barnett Halls need substantial renovations to fix aging heating and cooling systems, but are structurally sound. Violette Hall, Magruder Hall, Ophelia Parrish, and the Pickler Memorial Library are all currently in good condition. All of these buildings must be better maintained than they currently are being maintained; otherwise, they will suffer the same fate as Baldwin Hall and Pershing Building. If maintenance is improved, these buildings should be adequate for decades to come.

Two other buildings that merit special attention are the former Greenwood School and Grim-Smith Hospital. Both buildings were purchased by the University to allow for future expansion needs. The students urge that the University create a plan for the future use of these facilities.

### *Residential Facilities*

The University is committed to renovating each residence hall during the course of the next decade, starting with Missouri Hall during the 2006-2007 academic year and finishing approximately seven years later with Centennial Hall. In conjunction with the construction of a new residence hall that will be open in the fall of 2006, on-campus living conditions will improve markedly. However, several concerns still need to be addressed in order to make Truman's on-campus living facilities the envy of other universities.

### *Apartments*

While the Campbell Apartments are currently being renovated and modernized, there are no plans to renovate the Fair and Randolph Apartments at this time. These apartments are showing



their age and are in need of repair. However, the University is only doing minimal maintenance on these apartments. It appears that the University is considering tearing down the Fair and Randolph Apartments after the residence hall renovations have been completed. It is unclear whether the Randolph Apartments will be habitable for another decade, so the University needs to make a contingency plan for this situation.

## *Residence Halls*

Currently, the most pressing concern with regard to the residence halls is handicap accessibility. With the closure of the Missouri Hall dining facility during the 2006-2007 academic year, there will be no handicap-accessible dining hall for one year. In addition, Dobson, Blanton-Nason-Brewer, and Grim Halls do not currently have elevators. Although this will be resolved when each residence hall is renovated, handicap accessibility is still a concern for the next five years or so. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the future of Grim Hall. Originally built as quarters for nurses working at Grim-Smith Hospital, Grim Hall has seen several additions in the past few decades. The original part of the building is in poor condition and may not be cost-effective to renovate. Grim Hall currently houses approximately seventy students and the University needs to look at alternate housing options for these students in its long-term plan.

## *Student Union Building*

The Student Union Building will be going through a renovation process beginning in March 2006 and continuing for several years. The building will be renovated in stages, allowing parts of the building to be open at all times. The finished Student Union Building will include a larger dining area, a new student organizations center, and more functional heating and cooling. While the improvements will make the Student Union Building an even better place to be, there are other improvements that should be made as well.

The Student Union Building should be open 24 hours a day. The Bulldog Nights that currently take place are a step in the right direction, yet the University still needs to extend these hours. Along with the time extension, there should be a computer lab so students will have access to computers 24 hours a day. Mainstreet Market also needs extended hours and to be open on Saturdays. When Mainstreet Market is not open, the Student Union Building is failing to serve students.

The students commend the work of Student Union Director Sujit Chemburkar, who has been working on a philosophy for the Student Union that seeks to open the building to congregation, activity, and skill building. This type of work must continue to ensure that along with a top notch facility, there is also the mentality among the building staff that will ensure student-centered utilization and the building of a stronger student association.

There should not be any testing in the Student Union Building. Spanish classes currently use areas of the Student Union building for final examinations. This should not be the case as academic buildings are here for that purpose. This same concept was mentioned in the 1995 Student Senate Vision, *Challenges for a New Era*: "Activities not fundamental to the building's purpose, such as standardized testing and assessment, should be routed elsewhere as possible to free space for student activities" (Sifton et al, 1995).

Likewise, students should have the first right to use the Student Union Building. Although the situation has improved during the past two years, faculty members and administrators still get room reservations, leaving student organizations without a place to meet. *Challenges for a New Era* called for a "student advisory board" to look over and constantly monitor room reservations to make sure students always have the first priority (Sifton et al, 1995). We believe this board should



be implemented in order to achieve the goal of the 1995 Vision: ensure that student access to the Student Union Building is maximized.

## *Student Recreation Center*

The Student Recreation Center is a pillar of student collaboration and initiative on this campus. The facility serves numerous students by providing spaces for intramurals, club sports, and health classes. The recreation center also employs many students, which helps to fill the need for student employment opportunities. The recreation center is a hub for student activity from 6:30 in the morning to 11:00 at night. Students report a high level of satisfaction with the recreational facilities that the campus has to offer, with only 4.9 percent of respondents expressing any dissatisfaction on the 2005 GSQ (Gillette et al, 2005). Students also report an overwhelming satisfaction with the intramural program, with only 8.8 percent of respondents expressing any dissatisfaction in the same survey.

Because of ten years of heavy usage of the Student Recreation Center, it is starting to show its age. For example, much of the equipment is in need of continual maintenance and some of the upholstery is starting to tear, especially in the weight room. While these issues pale in comparison to some of the other facilities, the students feel it is essential to maintain a functional and up-to-date facility that can be the envy of other institutions our size.

Having been instrumental in the construction of the Student Recreation Center and because the center is funded through a \$95 per semester student fee, it is essential that Student Senate keep abreast of the status of maintenance and other happenings within the recreation center on a regular basis. In the research for this section of the document, it was found that a "student governing board" formerly existed within the Student Recreation Center that reported to Student Senate. It is uncertain at what point this board was terminated, but it needs to be revived. This board should primarily look into the feasibility and cost of repairs to make sure it does not degrade below its opening quality in 1996. The board should determine whether an increase in the fee is needed to support these necessary repairs; or if a sizable sum of Student Senate's budget was collected over a period of a few years, it would cover the repairs as not to incur a fee increase on the students.

One charge of this governing board should be to market the facility for student organization use. Many Greek organizations choose to use the recreation center in this capacity and it is the belief of the students that other organizations would as well. The governing board should also examine the current hours of the Student Recreation Center and suggest changes if necessary, especially to the weekend hours of operation. This will need to be examined as a cost-benefit analysis as it would raise operating expenses to extend the center's hours.

## *Campus Grounds*

Along with the academic facilities, the beauty of Truman's campus is often cited as a reason for attending the University. Although most of campus is attractive and welcoming, there are several areas that are hazardous and desperately need improvement. Improvements to walkways, landscaping, and lighting will ensure that Truman's campus is safe and accessible for all students and visitors.

### *Walkways*

As a whole, the walkways on campus are reasonably well-maintained. Some of the most dangerous walkways on campus have been fixed in recent years, such as the sidewalk between



Violette and Dobson Halls, which resulted in at least one burn due to a ruptured steam pipe just underneath the concrete (Gasch, 2004). A certain amount of damaged or closed walkways is to be expected, especially with the recent and upcoming construction on campus. However, there are still some walkways that are in need of serious repair.

The walkway in the worst repair is the brick walkway running south from Grim Hall to Pershing Building. There are several locations along the sidewalk in which much of the underlying foundation has sunk, leaving a dangerous gap in the middle of the brick. In some locations, this gap is two inches in height, resulting in a hazard to walkers and bicyclists and a serious impediment to disabled persons. Given that the entire foundation underneath the bricks would need to be replaced, it would not be an easy or inexpensive repair. However, it is necessary due to the serious nature and very public location of the problem.

Another walkway that merits special recognition is the sidewalk between Campbell Apartments and Ryle Hall. The current concrete sidewalk, located on the east side of Florence Street, runs on both city and University property. This sidewalk is quite narrow, obstructed by overhanging trees and bushes, and floods at the slightest rainfall. It is also not safe for students to walk on Florence Street because no curb and gutter exists from Stadium Drive to the Ryle Hall parking lot. On the west side of Florence Street, there is a precipitous drop from the crumbling road to the ditch below.

Since the west side of Florence Street is entirely University property, it is logical that a reconstructed sidewalk be added for the safety of all students. There will be additional costs to ensure proper drainage and to fill the ditch on the side of the street, but the costs are small in comparison to a pedestrian or bicyclist being hit by an automobile because he or she wanted to avoid the flooded sidewalk on the east side of the street. Given that a pedestrian at Truman has been killed by an automobile on another stretch of road that did not have a sidewalk, it is especially important to install a sidewalk on this dangerous street (Hart, 1997). A new sidewalk would also improve the aesthetics of the campus in the area of Stokes Stadium and the southeast entrance to campus.

### *Lawns and Landscaping*

When most visitors first see Truman's campus, their first comments are typically about the beauty of the well-kept grounds. This was first made a priority by Joseph Baldwin when the University was founded and has been followed faithfully almost all of the time. In 1925, President Fair appointed J. S. Stokes as curator of equipment and grounds, citing that: [Stokes has] "large knowledge of the construction and care of lawns, of decorative shrubs and plants, and is eminently fitted by education, experience, and inclination for the discharge of the duties of the position" (Ryle, 1972, 244).

In recent years, however, budgetary and personnel constraints have allowed some areas of Truman's grounds to fall into disrepair. Student abuse of the grounds has also had a negative impact in certain locations. There have been several paths cut through some of the most travelled areas on campus, including one broad dirt swath cutting across the heart of the Quadrangle. Various efforts through the years have been made to discourage student usage of that path, including placing shrubs at one end of the path, but none have had the desired effect. Since it is quite likely that students will continue to traverse that dirt path through the Quadrangle, it is time to make that unofficial path into some sort of walkway. A stone or brick path across that part of the Quadrangle could potentially work, but a concrete sidewalk would detract from the beauty of that area of campus.



Two other longer dirt paths on campus merit special mention in this document. There is an unsightly path, approximately seventy-five meters in length, which cuts from Barnett Hall northeast to Franklin Street. Most of the damage here has been caused by bicycle traffic through the grass in this area. A special concern for this path is the drainage ditch that enters directly into Bear Creek. The path is creating a gully in the hillside and could potentially affect the water quality of Bear Creek as sediment drains into the creek with each rainfall. The other long path that is aesthetically unpleasing is the path that bicycles have cut on the southwest side of Ryle Hall. Over two feet in diameter, this path floods at the slightest rainfall and is an eyesore that visitors see as they drive toward Pershing Building.

There are numerous areas across campus that are devoid of any grass, especially in areas with many trees. Some of the largest areas in need of reseeding include east of Violette Hall, in front of Dobson Hall, and the area northeast of Ophelia Parrish. Special care must be taken in order to keep students off the grass until the grass is established.

One area that always draws accolades from campus visitors is the flora on campus. The diversity of trees and flowers on campus truly gives Truman a park-like feel and contributes to the atmosphere of a small liberal arts college. The Physical Plant is to be commended for the beauty of campus and is urged to reseed the areas of bare ground in order to make campus look even better.

### *Lighting*

The greatest concern that students have expressed about the campus grounds regards lighting, especially on the perimeter of campus. Three areas of campus require special attention: the parking lot west of Centennial Hall to First Street, along Florence Street from Campbell Apartments to Patterson Street, and the sidewalk running from the stadium parking lot to Pershing Building along the west side of Stokes Stadium.

Many students leave campus late in the evening and have to park in the Stokes Stadium lot or the parking lots west of Centennial Hall and walk back to the main part of campus. These areas of campus are not well enough lit to make students feel secure late at night. The same situation is true as students walk to and from Campbell Apartments. Even though campus has proven to be a very safe place, students need to be reassured of their safety by having adequate lighting when there are few people around campus. Additional lighting on these portions of campus will accomplish that important objective.



## CHAPTER 5

# THE CITY OF KIRKSVILLE

### *Community Outreach*

**T**he Kirksville slogan, "Kirksville- Where People Make The Difference" is a sentiment that should be taken to heart by Truman students. While attending Truman, students become a part of not only the Truman community of learners, but also of the Kirksville community. Embracing this fact and striving to make a difference would be an important step in improving the sometimes strained relationship between students and their fellow citizens.

It is clear that Truman students are people who make a difference when looking at the many business and cultural opportunities that are brought to Kirksville that would not normally be available in a city the size of, or in the same rural setting as Kirksville. With the critical role that students have played in securing support for the expansion of Highway 63, it is crucial that Truman and Kirksville leaders work together to further this region's progress while remembering students are not just a source of sales tax revenue.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle that must be overcome to improve the University's relationship with the Kirksville community is the common perception that Truman students do not respect community members and vice versa. Part of this blame can be placed squarely on the shoulders of students as a large number of students draw artificial lines of separation between themselves and Kirksville residents. One student's response on the Vision Survey was all too common: "There is a definite distinction between the native Kirksville residents and the Truman students - I believe that most of the discrimination comes from Truman students and not towards them and I find that fascinating" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey). Although many students and campus organizations are to be commended for their community outreach and service efforts, more must be done to strengthen the bonds between Truman students and community members.

The students suggest three possible ways to strengthen the campus-community relationship. First, the current programs which serve as an introduction to Kirksville should be expanded. Events like Dawg Fest and football pep rallies on the courthouse square are beneficial in helping students feel comfortable in Kirksville. This is especially important as many incoming students are from communities much larger than Kirksville.

Even though the vast majority of students will not make Kirksville their permanent home, it is essential that all students become involved in local politics and community activities. The voice of Truman students will not be heard on a local level unless more students who are registered to vote in Kirksville actually do so. In past years, the campus added a voting precinct in the Student Union Building in an effort to increase student turnout. This, however, did not work; in the spring of 2005, only 81 on-campus students voted in the city council election out of almost 2,200 registered to vote in Kirksville (McFerron, 2005).

The Student Association must redouble its efforts to spark student involvement in local politics by inviting candidates for public office to speak on campus and promoting these forums throughout the community. This will help make the students more educated voters and increase turnout on campus. Opening such a forum to the community will provide an opportunity to build



campus-community relations.

Although students already do remarkable things that benefit local residents, many community members still do not know about all of the community service done by members of the University community. The University must work to better publicize events which benefit the entire community and actively strive to involve the community in such events. One student perfectly summarized this goal by stating, "Although we currently do the BIG event and also commonly invite the community to our events, we could use more service events that incorporate both the community and the University." (Fall 2005 Vision Survey)

## *Housing Issues*

With the current renovations of Truman's residence halls, approximately 100-200 fewer students will be able to live on campus until all renovations are complete in 2011. Even though it is usually less expensive to live off campus than on campus, that may not be the case once renovations begin. The expected increase in the number of people moving off campus could overwhelm the available supply of housing and cause a spike in housing prices. Complicating the housing shortage is the large number of students who have full scholarships and do not plan on living off campus. With the number of people wishing to live on campus staying steady or rising slightly, it appears likely that the best solution is to increase on campus housing.

A good solution to the impending housing shortage is to end sorority housing in Brewer Hall. An estimated twenty-five women in Brewer Hall do have their room and board paid for by the University and would likely stay on campus even if Brewer is opened to all students. Allowing sororities to move off campus has the potential to free up to one hundred and twenty-five beds during the renovation process. Since each sorority gets three room buyouts in Brewer Hall, opening the residence hall to all students would help increase the number of beds on campus. The sorority chapter rooms would be repainted and turned into bedrooms and student lobbies.

Since the sororities would then be moving off campus, their housing would be an issue. It would be prudent for the sororities to continue saving money for an off campus sorority complex. This would include housing for most or all Greek women, chapter rooms for Alpha Gamma Delta, Alpha Sigma Alpha, Delta Zeta, Sigma Chi Delta, Sigma Kappa, and Sigma Sigma Sigma; and a large multipurpose room that each sorority could reserve for date parties, chapter meetings, and other events. Although this would leave a housing gap in the near term, it is the best solution to improve both the Greek and non-Greek housing problems that Truman currently faces.

Another solution to the housing shortage would be to increase the off campus living stipend for students with full room and board scholarships. Since it is somewhat less expensive to live off campus, it does not need to be the same amount as on campus housing costs, but the stipend does need to be competitive in order to be effective. The University must recognize that students who came to Truman with the promise of a full room and board scholarship need to have that promise fulfilled. Although this will cost Truman more money in the next several years, it is the only equitable way to resolve the issue of full room and board scholarships.

## *Renters' Rights*

With the aforementioned issues regarding a possible housing shortage, it is important that Truman and the city of Kirksville come together as a community to provide forums and information for students in order to educate them on how to be informed renters. Many students who live in rental housing in Kirksville may be living in substandard conditions and not realize the situation until it is too late. Students all too well remember the October 15, 2002 incident in which six Truman students almost died due to a carbon monoxide leak in their rented house



(Webb, 2002). For this reason, the students must continue to work toward the reimplementation of a rental housing ordinance that ensures that proper standards of living and maintenance are met on rental properties. Until that is accomplished, it is essential that students are provided with up-to-date, pertinent information about their rights and responsibilities as renters in Kirksville. The Student Senate and the University should work to ensure that renters are notified of their rights and educate both the students and the community about renters' rights in order to better Kirksville as a whole.



## CHAPTER 6

# THE STATE OF MISSOURI

### State Appropriations

Between Fiscal Years 2001-02 and 2005-06, Truman increased in-state fees by fifty-five percent and out-of-state tuition by forty-three percent (Tuition, Fees, & Housing Charges, Budget and Institutional Research Office, Office of Admission, 2005). During this five-year period, Truman's appropriations from the state of Missouri have actually fallen by \$6,119,506, or almost thirteen percent (Historical State Appropriations to Missouri Public Higher Education Institutions, Missouri Department of Higher Education, 2005).

While Missouri's institutions of higher education have suffered as a result of substantial budget cuts, the state of Missouri has seen a 9.4 percent increase in revenue during the past five years (The Missouri Budget: FY 2004 Budget Summary." State of Missouri, Office of Administration, 2004). It is painstakingly clear that Missouri's budget is being balanced on the backs of the state's future: public university students. The state of Missouri ranked forty-seventh in the nation in terms of its percentage increase for higher education in the 2004-2005 academic year (Fischer, 2006.) As the table below shows, the decrease in state appropriations for Truman has been much larger than the decrease in state revenue. This has resulted in large increases in student fees.

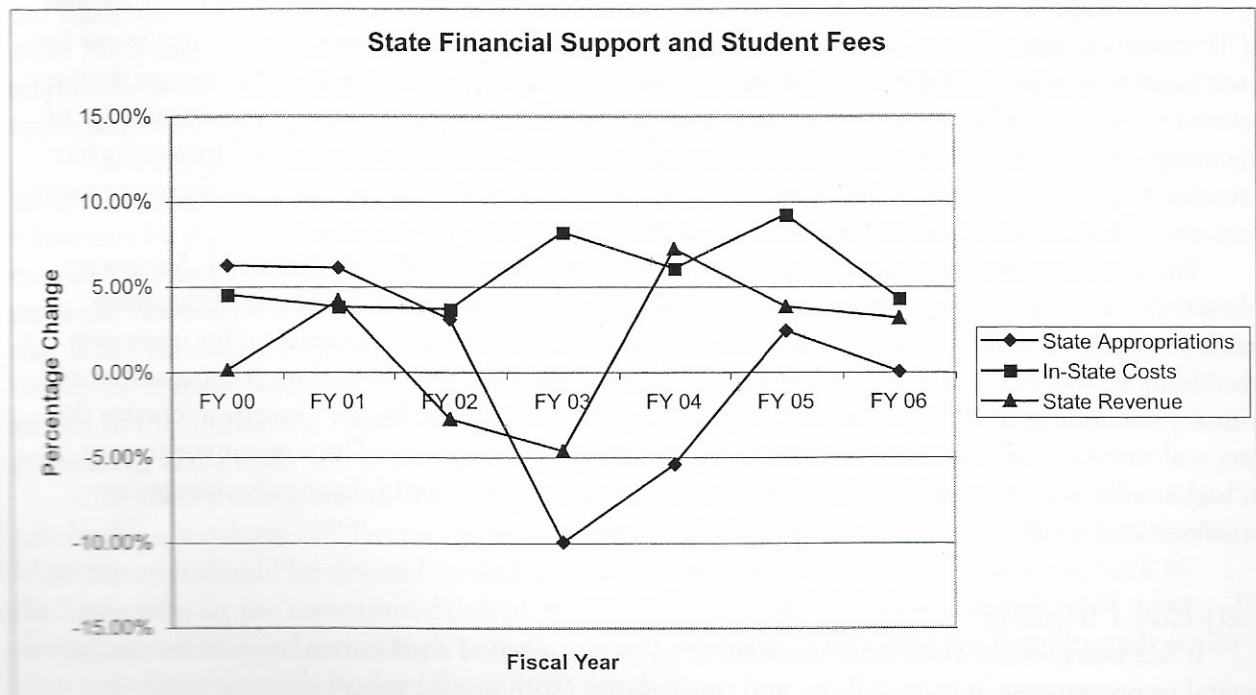


Figure 2. The state of Missouri's appropriations for Truman



It now appears that the state of Missouri has weathered its budget crisis and will not cut Truman's state appropriates in the foreseeable future. The students commend Governor Blunt for proposing a two percent increase in the University's funding in his Fiscal Year 2007 budget. He has stated that "we need to get [universities] back to where they were in funding, and this is a step in that direction" (Young, 2006). We can only hope that he continues to request more funds for the University in his future budgets.

The main reason why Truman receives a larger amount of funding on a per capita basis than any other state school is due to the University's mission as a highly selective public liberal arts and sciences university. It costs Truman more money per capita to provide the small class sizes and individual attention that is a hallmark of a liberal education while making it affordable for all students.

At this point in time, the Missouri Legislature is seriously considering moving more in the direction of per-student funding instead of the current system of mission-based funding. This would have a devastating impact on Truman as state funding could be cut by approximately twenty-five percent. As a result, it is likely that students will see fees increase by a similar amount. What makes Truman unique is that it is one of the few universities at which students can get an affordable liberal education. Per-student funding would endanger that and severely reduce the number of students able to afford a Truman education.

### *The Coordinating Board for Higher Education*

In the past, Truman has been able to convince the state's Coordinating Board for Higher Education about the merits of providing mission-based funding to this institution. However, Governor Blunt is considering altering the structure and influence of the Coordinating Board. Some potential changes are including state college and university presidents on the Coordinating Board and creating the position of a state Commissioner of Education.

The current structure of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education is in the best interest of Truman because of its institutional memory and largely apolitical nature. The present terms for the Coordinating Board for Higher Education are six years in length, making them longer than a governor's term in office. The longer terms also give the Coordinating Board better knowledge of the unique needs of each state university—something which aids a mission-funded university like Truman. Only five members of the nine-member Coordinating Board may be from the same party, curtailing political pressures and allowing for a steadier course.

The Student Association is strongly against both of Governor Blunt's proposed changes to Missouri's higher education governance. Since the Coordinating Board for Higher Education sends funding recommendations to the state Legislature, it is a conflict of interest for university presidents to vote on recommending budgets for their own institutions. A state commissioner of primary, secondary, and higher education, who would be appointed by the Governor, creates the very real situation of politicizing almost all higher education decisions. The current continuity in higher education would likely be eliminated as each governor would drastically change the priorities and funding for all institutions of higher education.

### *Capital Funding*

It has been several years since the state of Missouri released a substantial sum of money for capital improvements at state colleges and universities. With several aging buildings which are desperately in need of repairs, Truman is in great need of capital appropriations. The last major capital appropriation from the state was for Magruder Hall in the late 1990s. It is absolutely crucial that Truman's academic facilities become top-of-the-line; this will not happen without increased



capital funding from the state of Missouri.

With the current fiscal climate in the state of Missouri, it looks unlikely that Truman will receive any major capital appropriations in the next several years. While still actively working with the Missouri Legislature to show the need for increased funding for higher education and capital appropriations, Truman also must examine other sources of funding in order to make all necessary improvements.

### *Advancement/Fundraising*

Mark Gambiana, Vice-President for University Advancement, quoting Peter Silas, former CEO of Phillips Petroleum, stated during a July 19, 2005 presentation that "we [the University] can no longer wait for the storm to pass . . . we must learn to work in the rain." This document's tenure will surely not see the end of the storm, which is stagnant or decreasing higher education funding from the state, and we truly must learn to work in the rain. Truman has not had to exist in an environment where private fundraising is essential to survive (Ryle, 1972). Therefore, some amount of change is necessary.

The first environment that must change is our external environment. The students encourage the University to continue pursuing a concerted effort to reignite and foster new relationships with our alumni and friends. Students are a great tool in this effort and the students encourage the University to utilize us to enhance relationships that may yield in gifts towards the University. One of the most effective organizations in this regard is the new Student Alumni Council. This group is an essential connector between the Office of Advancement and the students in order to foster an environment that is conducive to institutional support.

The University should also start making better connections with corporate partners and encouraging them to donate money. This will not only strengthen Truman monetarily in the face of continued state budget cuts, but it may also give greater employment opportunities for our students. The better engrained our corporate friends are with the mission of Truman, the more likely they will be to want our students in their businesses. The efforts of reforming our relationships with alumni and friends will bring about greater support while also strengthening the opportunities for students on a national level.

The second environment that must change is our internal environment, which consists of faculty and staff as well as students. Faculty and staff can be integral parts of raising funds for the University by showing needs to potential donors and by contributing themselves to the causes to which we have committed ourselves as an institution. Creating a giving culture from current students, however, is a serious concern. Many comments from the Vision Survey show a culture that is not conducive to giving back to the University. One student stated, "I have given a lot of money to Truman before graduation! It's called tuition. I don't plan on being involved in giving money to the University. I have received a lot of information on donation this semester, since I'm graduating, and I really feel like it's a slap in the face!" (Fall 2005 Vision Survey)

One theory that seems to account for this mentality is that because many students receive scholarships, a culture of "Truman gives, so the students don't have to give back" has developed. More research should be devoted to studying why the culture is negative toward giving back to the University. In the meantime, Student Senate and the Student Alumni Council must make developing a culture of giving back to the University a priority. This could be done through senior class projects or through student alumni membership.

With substantial increases in higher education funding from the state of Missouri being unlikely in the future, not enough can be stated about the importance of advancement and fundraising. What is really suggested here is a culture shift rather than any substantive



programmatic changes and the students encourage the University to pursue this change for the sake of the longevity of the institution. From this, Truman can also achieve significant progress on our journey towards national recognition, by recognizing the wide area in which our alumni and friends are found, and by enhancing the opportunities for students in those areas as well.

## *Board of Governors*

It has now been twenty years since students were first allotted one non-voting representative to the Board of Governors. Throughout the last two decades, each and every student representative has been a shining example of Truman students in general and has represented himself or herself more than competently in front of the Board of Governors.

The selection process for a student representative to the Board of Governors is long, rigorous, and designed to ensure that each student representative is impeccably qualified to hold such an important position. After advertising the position for almost a month, an interview committee and Student Senate interview all of the candidates and select the three most qualified students to send to the governor. The governor and his or her staff again interview each of the three candidates and select the most qualified student to serve a two-year term on the Board of Governors. The entire process usually takes at least three or four months to complete.

Since students have so much at stake in the future of the University, it is only logical that students have a voting seat on the Board of Governors. In Fiscal Year 2005, students provided forty-seven percent of the operating budget for Truman (FY 2005 Operating Budget, Budget and Instructional Research Office, 2005). When students are directly affected by Board policy and play such a large role in funding the day-to-day operations of Truman, it is imperative that the nearly six thousand students who attend the University have a vote in University policy.

In the 2002, 2004, and 2005 legislative sessions, there have been bills introduced that would give one voting seat on the Board of Governors to a Truman student (HB 1527 [2002], HB 1417 [2004], HB 440[2005]). Although none of the bills passed the Legislature, it was more due to the fact that the General Assembly did not view the issue as such a high priority as health care or K-12 education than to there being any opposition. In fact, there has never been opposition from the General Assembly over granting students a vote on the Board of Governors. Rather, the challenge for Truman students is to make the issue a top priority for legislators in upcoming sessions.

The biggest student issue with the Board of Governors in the past several years has been regarding the lack of a nondiscrimination clause that includes sexual orientation at Truman. In the spring of 2004, Student Senate passed a resolution by a 29-1 margin that called for the inclusion of the sexual orientation clause. Despite overwhelming support from both Student Senate and Faculty Senate, the Board chose to not include the sexual orientation clause.

Students and faculty at Truman still support including the sexual orientation clause in Truman's nondiscrimination policy. This is one of the instances in which Truman students need a vote on the Board of Governors, so student attitudes can be expressed at the highest level.



## CONCLUSION

# BEYOND THE HORIZON

Truman State University lies at a critical juncture in its long history. The past twenty years have seen dramatic changes in the way the university has viewed both its educational goals and its mission. It has now solidified its existence as a liberal arts and sciences university and has clearly set itself apart as a school committed to excellence. It has cultivated a reputation of having a student body which is capable of achieving such excellence. Truman must now, as a collective community, decide if it is to remain a regionally recognized university or if our goal is to be a nationally recognized liberal arts and sciences university. Five years ago, it was written in *An Education with Character* that a “fear of stagnation haunts Truman State University” (Rotert et al, 1999). This fear still exists and in some cases has been realized. However, a fresh current of change has recently swept through campus, giving life to ideas and innovations that seem destined to transform the University yet again. While this change should not revolutionize the campus as was the case in 1985 and 1995, it should be a recommitment to the ideals, philosophies, and principles which Truman committed to fulfill in 1985 through the passage of HB 196, and to an odyssey that will lead to the best methods to achieve each.

With that in mind, it is important to recognize what elements will help Truman become a nationally recognized university. First, Truman must produce students who are able to effectively sell liberal arts and sciences degrees to the people who they influence, both during their college years and after graduation. The process for achieving this goal is twofold. First of all, Truman students must understand the value of a liberal arts degree and must be able to communicate the academic, personal, and professional advantages to others. If students do not even perceive or recognize the advantages of their degree, they are certainly not capable of persuading others of the value of a liberal arts degree. This must go hand in hand with an effort to make Truman students more prestigious. Truman students who receive highly esteemed honors, participate in research of national significance, or are employed in prominent professions will reflect well upon Truman and bring greater recognition to the University.

The only way to help increase recognition for individual students is to make Truman students more desirable. A method to achieve greater desirability is to increase the value of current degrees. In order for a Truman degree to have the same prestige as nationally renowned institutions, the coursework must have a rigorous reputation. Classes must be challenging and rigorous, even more rigorous than they are now. Truman must seek students who can perform at a higher level than required at other Midwestern institutions and Truman must demand top performance from those students. Truman must be more selective while maintaining enrollment goals to ensure that the students recruited are capable of the requirements of excellence, which will require recruiting on a more of national basis. Increased selectiveness must also be accompanied with increased incentives. The best and brightest students from a wide variety of backgrounds will be more enabled and inclined to attend Truman if they are taken care of financially.

If Truman is to provide superior financial support to its gifted students, the University must be able to secure increasing funding from public and private sources while continuing to be fiscally prudent in its endeavors. An important question that haunts the University is whether or



not Truman can become a more prestigious institution, regardless of the state's level of support. Truman has seen decreased funding from the state of Missouri in recent years and as a result has been compelled to raise tuition rates. If Truman wishes to be truly great, it must offer competitive scholarships to attract the best students, increase faculty salaries to the market rate, and provide cutting-edge facilities. To this end, Truman must seek alternative means of revenue even with slight increases in funding from the state of Missouri. Greater effort must be made in soliciting funds from corporations and alumni. Truman must seek to build a culture of giving back to the University; corporations that benefit from employing successful Truman alumni must receive special attention, as should successful Truman alumni who benefit from the liberal arts degree that they have received.

Truman must seek to eliminate the apologetic mindset that students have about going to school in Kirksville. Some of this mindset exists because the negative opinions of a few students have become popular. Some of this mindset, however, is perpetuated by the University. For example, the front page of the Truman website during the fall semester of 2005 contained this quote: "I enjoy Kirksville because it is a nice slow-down from the big city, but there is still plenty to do." This attitude of making Kirksville the condescending focus of the Truman experience is detrimental to Truman's image as a highly selective university. There are many nationally acclaimed universities in communities comparable to Kirksville. The University must rid itself of any negative stigma of going to Truman starting with a sense of pride in being an excellent university based on its merit alone.

The ideas outlined above are in no way meant to represent a complete formula on how to achieve our goals. Rather, they are merely thoughtful suggestions designed to begin a debate on how to become a nationally recognized university. A renewed discussion and implementation of systematic and specific policies is the best way to fully realize the covenant we have made, not only to the citizens of Missouri, but to ourselves. We must also share the ideal of the liberal arts education embodied in our beloved University with the farthest reaches of the nation and the world. We must proclaim our mission and exhibit the excellence that pervades Truman by sending forth our students into the world as evidence of the effects of a distinguished university, equipping them with capacity to affect the nation. We must expand opportunities for students to the lofty height of national attention and merit. We must make it recognized that the competence and capabilities of our graduates are superb in whatever capacity they are employed due to the intensity and breadth of their education. We must search for ways of financing our goals with less dependence on the state and instead seek to solicit greater contributions from corporations and alumni, with the goal of financially aiding the best and brightest students. Finally, we must believe in our image and destiny, striving to create a sense of pride in what we are as a University located in the heart of America. It is essential to remember that these proposals are meant to bring innovative policy and effective change to improve Truman while preserving the tradition of excellence that positively impacts the students in very significant ways. As we blaze new trails in policy and practice, let us remember that the steps that we take today will lead to the Truman of Tomorrow – a shining beacon of higher education.



# CODE OF POLICIES

## TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**Section 7.040 Student Senate.** The Student Senate is the official elected governing body of the Student Association and exists to represent the long term best interest of the Student Association in the formulation of University policy and in the fulfillment of the University Mission. It is the policy of the Board of Governors that the Student Senate should feel free to approach the President of the University with its suggestions and recommendations relating to the formulation of University policy and the achievement of the Mission of the University.

Approved unanimously, on April 8, 1996, by the Student Senate

Approved unanimously, on June 14, 1996, by the Board of Governors

Mary Rhodes Russell  
President of the Board of Governors

Jack Magruder  
President of the University

Scott Sifton  
Student Senate President  
when passed by the Senate

Danny Rotert  
Student Senate President  
when passed by the Board



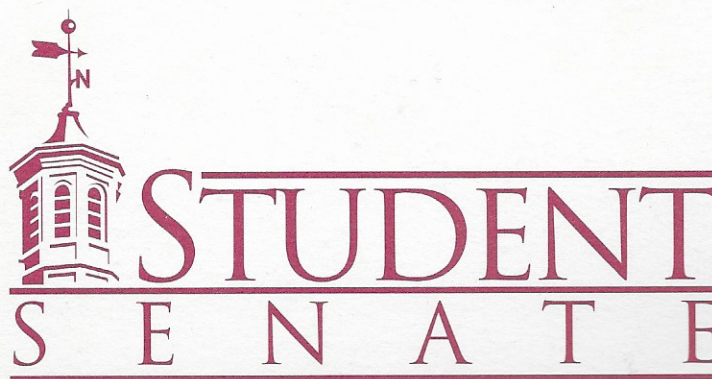
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