

## OUR VIEW

## Bearden's bill has right aims, but it falls short

Speaker Pro Tem Carl Bearden, R-St. Charles, said he plans to propose a bill Thursday in the Missouri House of Representatives that would implement a partial voucher system for state higher education (see story, Page 1). This bill, the same piece of legislation he proposed last year in the House, would have implications for both public and private institutions.

According to Bearden, his proposal will not affect the manner in which funds are allocated within the higher education budget. He has made it clear that this bill will not discriminate in the ongoing debate between allocating funds on a performance-based level or on a per-pupil basis.

Bearden said he will propose a base level of funding at the amount allocated to higher education in the 2002 fiscal year, and that amount will be set aside to be dispersed expressly to the state's public higher education institutions. Any monies allocated to higher education beyond that total will be distributed as higher-education vouchers to Missouri residents.

Bearden has made it clear that this bill will not take effect until higher education is funded at the level it was endowed in 2002.

We do not disagree with the aims of Bearden's bill. The driving force behind the proposal is an aim to make higher education more affordable for more Missouri residents. Bearden's Web site notes that "Missouri's higher education system has earned an 'F' for education affordability by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education." College is a considerable expense and one that many cannot af-

ford. Thus, such an attempt to make higher education more inexpensive is a noble aim. We do, however, think it is cogent to outline a number of issues.

First, we question the timing of the proposal. The state is mired in a budget shortfall, and state-funded higher-education institutions are facing a possible 10 percent to 12 percent cut in state allocations. Although Bearden has said he wishes to have a plan in place once funding reaches 2002 levels again, it is unclear why such a bill is necessary now. The speaker pro tem's efforts would be better concentrated in an effort to deal with Missouri's current budget shortfall.

Second, if 2002 funding levels aren't reached for another several years, does Bearden expect higher-education institutions to be functional at that funding level in 2012 or 2015? In its current form, his bill does not account for rising costs or inflation. Tuition and costs inevitably will rise during the long run.

Third, because of this, a sunset provision must be built in to accommodate inflation and rising costs. Colleges and universities only can operate sufficiently on a 2002 budget for so long. It is unrealistic to expect otherwise.

In conclusion, we do not disagree with Bearden's aims, nor do we expressly disagree with a voucher system, provided it does not detract from institutions' funding levels or lead to the implementation of a per-pupil allocation system. We do not think the time is right for such a bill to be proposed, however, nor do we believe it wise to pass such a bill without providing for increasing costs to colleges and universities.

“First, we question the timing of the proposal ... it is unclear why such a bill is necessary now.”

## Truville

Perrin Carrell/cartoonist



## Letters to the Editor

### Reader's response to anti-abortion advertisement misses the mark

This is in response to Adam Buran's letter commenting on the "Tired Yet?" ad insert in the Index. I agree with Adam that the insert oversimplified the issue of abortion and brushes aside very complex issues within the debate. However, I disagree with him that the Index should not have run the advertisement.

In his letter, he states, "But still you probably contend that just because you released it doesn't mean your periodical shares any views with 'Tired Yet?' it was just an advertisement. Do you really think that is an excuse?"

This is about more than an advertisement. The Index regularly includes advertisements from groups stating political and personal views. Before the war in Iraq, the Index included a full page ad of people denouncing action in Iraq. More recently, a full page ad was taken of people supporting a GLBT event. In [the Nov. 17 issue], they include an ad from People for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty in Kirksville. It would be neither fair nor just for the Index to refuse the Human Life Alliance an ad. Refusing them would have implied that there are certain subjects or views that are not appropriate for these ads, creating a rather large inconsistency in policy.

If people are opposed to the "Tired Yet?" advertisement, they can criticize the material itself, or even find an organization that can run another ad countering it. However, do not criticize the Index just because it runs such ads. Although it is true that the Index profits from these advertisements, it is not meant to be at the expense of any view. It is out of a sense of fairness and free speech.

Christopher Maher  
Senior

### Anonymous poem posted on campus lacked humor, coherence

I would like to issue an open letter of thanks to the author of the anonymous poem I found tacked to the announcement board outside Mainstreet Market. This little piece of literary jetsam truly made my day last Wednesday. I don't think I can pick out one thing that made your poem so great: Perhaps it was the excitingly irregular meter, the intermittent rhyme scheme, the daring use of all caps or what appeared to be a veiled threat against KCOM in the final stanza. Perhaps it was your counterhegemony rejections of coherency or the absence of anything resembling a sense of humor. Truly you have shown us all that the best way to protest the contents of a newspaper article is an anonymous poem partially concealed by a Damascus Road poster. Good on you, "Doctor Mom," and may all Truman students profit by your example!

Megan Kennedy  
Junior

### Alumnus responds to Essex's refusal to return for Homecoming

Dear Mr. Essex,  
Get over yourself.  
What are you trying to prove by not attending your 20th reunion in protest of The Index allowing Mr. Iles to exercise his First Amendment rights by writing letters? While you may not agree with Mr. Iles, he still has just as much right as you to voice his concerns in this forum. If you graduated from Northeast Missouri State University 20 years ago, that would make you approximately 42 years of age, and frankly, I find your actions quite shameful for an adult of your age. Homecoming

is not about the Index. The foolishness displayed in this section of the newspaper has not originated with Mr. Iles. The foolishness is all yours. Sure, the Index might not be perfect, but it is a far better college publication than many I have encountered, and I commend the staff for continuing to do an excellent job and encourage the editorial board to continue to consider all letters for publication, not just those that fall in line with one person's ideology.

As a fellow alumnus of this fine institution, I am ashamed of your actions, Mr. Essex. I also encourage all my fellow alumni (even you, Mr. Essex) to make a contribution to Truman, not only to aid the educational process, but to show that the alumni of this institution are not all as childish and closed-minded as Mr. Essex. My donation is already in the mail.

Bob Ell  
Alumnus

### Students' attempts to save time are destroying picturesque Quad

I am writing with a concern that is very minor compared to other topics often discussed in this forum. But nonetheless, it is a constant irritant to many of us. I walk to work everyday and love walking across the lovely Quad. When I ask students why they chose Truman, the beauty of our campus is something they often mention.

However, there is one thing that mars this picturesque spot, and that is the ugly scar that is the footpath caused by students with not enough energy to walk around the Quad. Can't we have enough respect to not foul our own nest? Over the past few summers I have watched as our facilities workers have tried valiantly to remove this scar. They have planted new grass. They have laid new sod. But as soon as the students arrive in the fall, they plow right back across this natural space. Workers even tried planting bushes to encourage students to walk around. Students smashed right through the bushes. The new park benches on the Quad were placed so as to encourage people to quit cutting across and creating a scar. Again, to no avail.

I am so irritated by this. I actually timed how much time is saved by leaving the sidewalk and destroying the grass on the Quad. The answer is 30 seconds. That is really sad. I believe there is a simple solution. If the facilities folks would simply post simple signs at strategic locations saying "Save the Grass and Walk Around," I truly believe students would respect our common space. Mizzou did this a few years ago, and it made a huge difference. Thanks for your consideration.

Jeff Gall  
Associate Professor of History

### Funding proposal may endanger resources of public institutions

Truman students should be deeply concerned about a proposal by state Rep. Carl Bearden, R-St. Charles, that would divert some of the taxes from state colleges and universities to individual students. According to the Columbia Daily Tribune (Nov. 15), state schools would still receive a basic level of funding somewhere between what they currently receive and what they received in 2002. The rest would go directly to Missouri students to help cover undergraduate tuition in public and private universities in Missouri.

This system may substantially reallocate funding to private schools at the expense of public institutions. Currently, the tax money that is allocated to state schools goes directly into the operating

funds of these schools, which figure out tuition based on expected enrollment and the amount of income required to cover remaining costs and capitalizations. Under the new plan, the allocation to state schools would be limited to some basic level (the article estimated around \$900 million), with the remainder transferred to students to use toward their respective tuition bills.

Because costs continue to increase (blame inflation and the fallout from this year's judgment), the amount of funding that schools require will also increase. If increases in enrollment and donations do not cover increases in costs, tuition hikes will likely cover the shortfall. Those tuition hikes do not pose a problem for students so long as the proposed state allocation per student increases sufficiently. However, the state allocation per student will only increase if the portion of the budget earmarked for higher education increases, or if tax revenues increase. Because this bill is the antithesis of education funding, it is unlikely that the portion of the budget allocated to education will increase.

Likewise, the Republican leadership is notoriously against raising taxes. Barring a massive expansion of the tax base in Missouri, it looks like we public university students will be caught making up the difference. Higher education in Missouri already ranks low in affordability – something the state schools were intended to improve. Any argument that this bill will help people to afford college follows a perverse logic.

The U.S. News & World Report annual survey of colleges and universities includes 18 private and 9 public bachelor-degree granting institutions in Missouri (not all replied to the survey). There were 57,013 undergraduates enrolled in private schools, compared with 90,887 in the public schools. The bill will thus be a net transfer of funds from the many to the few. The few are the well-off few at that.

U.S. News & World Report also posts each institution's endowment – a base of cash and securities that can be used for construction, research or can be invested to provide a flow of income to offset future costs. Truman's \$16 million endowment looks tiny compared to St. Louis University's \$706 million and Washington University's \$4.01 billion endowments. That translates to an endowment of \$2,868 per Truman undergraduate student, but nearly \$100,000 per SLU student and more than \$550,000 per Wash U student. Lindenwood University in St. Charles is the exception. Its \$27 million endowment averages just short of \$5,000 for each of the 5,512 students.

Maybe that's why Rep. Bearden is pushing this bill – his private job is to pursue funding for the school. His phone is not listed on the school's Web site, but his office number is 636-949-4903. Regardless of the size of a school's endowment, taxpayer funds for public education should be used for the purpose of providing affordable, quality education. The market does a poor job of delivering affordable education, in general, as evidenced by private college and university price tags that double or triple state tuition.

While it is permissible and appropriate for Missouri to subsidize research at universities, public or private, Rep. Bearden's plan will not accomplish that. Rather, his proposal amounts to a state subsidy of private education, paid out of the pockets of students at public colleges and universities.

Jeremy Loschneider  
Alumnus

## INDEX Web poll

Do you turn your cell phone off during class?

### Nov. 29 Results

as of midnight Tuesday

40% (46)

Always.

19% (22)

Sometimes.

16% (19)

I just forget.

25% (29)

What cell phone?

### THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

vote online at  
www.trumanindex.com

Do you support the animal testing that takes place at A.T. Still University of Health Sciences?

## INDEX

### STAFF

#### Editor in Chief

Whitney McFerron

#### Managing Editor

Kalen Ponche

#### Opinions Editor

Justin Weinrich

#### News Editor

Alison Bowen

#### Assistant News Editors

Jessie Gasch

Alan Reiningger

#### Sports Editor

Conor Nicholl

#### Assistant Sports Editor

Ross Houston

#### Features Editor

Erin Sadzewicz

#### Assistant Features Editor

Sara DeGonia

#### Photo Editor

Chris Waller

#### Assistant Photo Editor

Lisette Metz Grulke

#### Head Copy Editor

Christine Albrecht

#### Business Manager

Shaun Moynihan

#### Design Editor

Roger Meissen

#### Online Editor

Chris Tharp

#### Circulation Manager

Cari Twaddle

#### Advertising Manager

Christina Carter

#### Convergence Manager

Karen Schwartztrauber

#### Design Staff

Lindsay Koski

#### Copy Editors

Nathan Becker

Alaina Brockhouse

Amanda Knox

Audrey Leihser

Sadye Scott-Haincheck

Andrew Seal

Nick Wilsey

#### Advertising Staff

Megan Barry

Lindsay McReynolds

Prajwal Sharma

#### News Staff Reporters

Salma Ahmed

Amanda Boyle

Kyle Hill

Grace Mattie

Alan Venneman

#### Features Staff Reporters

Alicia Collins

Naomi Davis

Maggie Wolcott

#### Sports Staff Reporters

Joseph Barker

Tyler Madsen

John Scognamiglio

Josh Sisson

John Weeks

#### Photographers

Nick Corich

Adam Kabins

Lisa Margetis

Courtney Robbins

Chris Tharp

Kelsey Vaughn

#### Distribution

Ed Esquivel

Laura Johnson

#### Adviser

Steve Stepanek

Serving the University community since 1909

## Editorial policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The production offices are located in the Student Union Building. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. Content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff.

The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Index through a majority vote of the Editorial Board, consisting of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

First copies are free. Additional copies are 25 cents.

## Letters policy

The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 300 words except at the discretion of the editorial board.

All letters to the editor MUST be typed, double-spaced, signed and include a phone number for verification.

Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at [index@truman.edu](mailto:index@truman.edu) or on our Web site at [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com). Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.