

## OUR VIEW

## Accused players should be judged by the legal system

It is generally accepted in our society that no one should stand above the law, but one of the key tenets of the American legal system is to consider the accused innocent until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

Truman's football program has come under fire recently after team members Joshua Kilcrease and Darnell Williams allegedly attacked two Kirksville residents outside the Wooden Nickel last month. On Monday, both players plead not guilty to the felony assault charges against them (See story, Page 1), and head football coach Shannon Currier has said he does not plan to take any formal disciplinary actions against them until the court hands down its ruling.

But in Monday's issue of the Kirksville Daily Express, sports columnist Jason Hunsicker explicitly called for the suspension of both players and described the Currier's stance of "inaction" as both "disgusting" and "embarrassing." Given the gravity of the charges, we think this is an easy and undoubtedly reasonable standpoint to take. Overall outrage in the Kirksville community is not unwarranted – if convicted, both Kilcrease and Williams could face a minimum of 10 years in prison for the alleged assaults. And we agree that, if found guilty, the players should be punished to the fullest extent under the law and, if necessary, within the University system.

However, despite the criticism and general community indignation, we think it is tremendously important to remember that, at least at this point, both men remain innocent in the eyes of the law.

Kilcrease and Williams are not scheduled to go to trial until March 6, and with

judicial proceedings still in the early stages, there might be evidence of which the general community still is unaware. Both players plead not guilty Monday, which indicates this could be the case.

Another concern is the effect this scandal could have on the relationship between the University and members of the greater Kirksville community. We understand that the allegations against Kilcrease

and Williams are extremely serious, but we hope that Kirksville residents will look beyond this incident and not characterize all Truman athletes unfavorably. Athletes provide a great service to

our city by completing service projects and promoting a sense of school and community togetherness.

Even if the charges are deemed legitimate during the players' trial, we stand by Currier's decision to support his players until the court gives its final ruling. A large part of being the coach of any athletic team is promoting team unity and cohesiveness, namely when times are difficult.

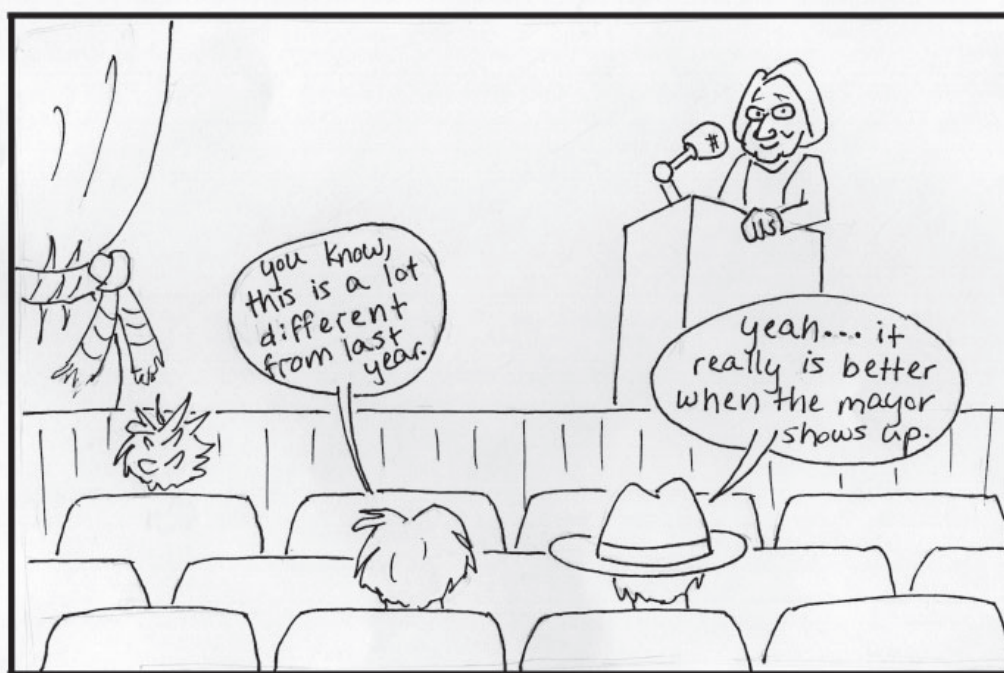
The message that Currier would send by suspending his players, especially during the off-season, most likely would appear to the rest of his team as a formal condemnation without consideration of the players' actual guilt or innocence. The modus operandi of many other athletic programs that automatically dismiss a player accused of a crime from his or her team is too harsh. Instead of making his decision based on the court of public opinion, Currier did the right thing not to acquiesce. Courts of law exist for a reason.

“Instead of making his decision based on the court of public opinion, Currier did the right thing not to acquiesce.”

## Truville

Perrin Carrell/cartoonist

### Kirksville State of the City Address 2006



## Letters to the Editor

### Students, residents should petition police for greater accountability

During the past few years, there are problems with our police department that are of great concern to many citizens and me. We have a problem keeping officers. We hear it is because of pay. In my opinion this is not the total reason.

I feel it is time for our city manager and Council to investigate the departments or have it investigated by a firm or person that has no affiliation with the departments or employees. When we file a formal complaint against an officer, who investigates it? Is it done in the department by one of his co-workers. Is this proper procedure? Could this not lead to a big cover-up or, in my terms, a sweep-under-the-rug approach to the problems? Is it not time for our city manager and Council to take a deep look into the department and see if it is time for a restructuring of the department?

When we hired a new chief of police, I was so in hope things would change. But it seems we have gone back to the old ways. Citizens, you do have the right to report problems with the different departments and their employees to the city manager and the City Council, and they should investigate it. Many times they do not know what is happening in the departments or the complaints we have because they do not hear from the citizens.

I feel it is time for Kirksville to have an advisory committee formed to check into these complaints on our city government and its many different departments. This is the only way things can be improved or changed. Please notify a council member and the city manager when you have a complaint or problem.

Dana McDowell  
Kirksville Resident

better as well as throwing out blanket accusations against football players in general. In her argument, Ms. Gant mentions that football players are known to be vandals and destructive in the community yet fails to give any examples. Because she does not cite one incident or have any information to substantiate her argument, it is nothing more than a blanket accusation making her letter trite and picky without reason.

Having been a bartender and manager at Patterson's, I have witnessed many people, students, athletes and local residents act in ways unfit for public while drunk and sober. I have seen close friends suffer consequences of their actions that have been similar to the one involving Josh and Darnell, and yet people have not read about it in the Index or Daily Express.

It is too common in Kirksville that people get drunk and make mistakes, hurting themselves and others in the process. Because Josh and Darnell play football, I believe a lot of added attention has been placed on them. If they are found guilty by a jury of their peers, then they should be punished. However, it is my greatest hope that this whole experience will serve as a reminder to the community that students and local residents alike, not just football players, are capable of doing stupid things while sober or intoxicated. If the two were not football players would Ms. Gant had made the same comments or even reach the same conclusions? It is obvious she does not care much for Truman football players, but that is no excuse to pass judgment on other individuals without being properly informed.

Greg Klipsch  
Alumnus

### Dixon's cuts are coming because of decisions of former president

As a local taxpayer, I will, gladly, ally my voice to that of TSU senior J. Jones and NMSU alumna E. Hoppis in their moving pleas (Jan. 19 issue of the Index) for TSU President Barbara Dixon to "reconsider" her memo detailing such things as the complete severance wickedly altogether of the Child Development Center on supposed "economy" necessity grounds. Such programs, along with the genuinely high reputation of the old NMSU and TSU nursing ones, give this community institution any lingering, real local esteem because such graduates as they produce and caring nurture they provide, remind us, we "locals," of the original give back to real commonwealth priorities "mission" of the NMSU foundation of this place in founders' teacher training but liberal arts intended foundation.

I also think, too, Jones and Hoppis are justified in being a bit personally rude in suggesting Dixon look, in his former suggestion, do "personal her economies" such as ending the wholly needless free house she is given, "lobbying," after all, these 2006 days, can be done by e-mail and air to Jefferson City, and very little Kirksville entertainment is thus venue requisite up here, surely in original but now valueless "perk" such as this house she frivolously burdens us with!

Yet, frankly, it is a bit chauvinistically rich, for both complainants to fault all Dixon's cuts or to openly mourn for a restaging of the Magruder predecessor regime presidentially, whose vast construction site projects and absurdly over-Ph.D., ultra-conservative, white, male hirings got NMSU/TSU into this mess in the first place! Nor as, Index your editorials have suggested, to ignore that by voting cuts Republican, lots of voters and alumni have

brought on this squeeze pruning excesses in self-wound infliction. So I do support Dixon in her athletes' cuts and do so providing she does not give Garry Gordon or the silly Hoffman, Leaque administrator clique even more incompetents' power. Her noble attempt, too, to at last shrink the real costs you students suffer and we taxpayers, in the over-male, arrogant, unaccountable division heads non-teacher structures deserves our endorsement.

It is the same ex-President Jack Magruder your two correspondents bizarrely pine for who let vast construction, athletes and division heads' powers all grow to expenditure excess that now, rightly, Dixon knows, warrior, she's got to hydra-slash to make "ends meet," even if she should rethink the vitality of the social programs, madam!

Larry Iles  
Kirksville Resident

### Alumnus responds to his defense of Kirksville resident's letters

I thought about writing a long, drawing-out letter detailing my reasons for defending Mr. Iles' right to criticize our government and how defending free speech is not the same as condoning certain points of view. However, it really isn't worth the time. Therefore, I'll sum up my thoughts on this issue rather succinctly: Do I think that Mr. Iles' letters are, to put it mildly, extreme? Yes. Do I agree with the things he says? No. However, as Mr. Essex pointed out in his last letter, we are at a time of war, which I wholeheartedly believe makes free speech more important than ever, government criticisms included.

Mr. Essex: While Mr. Iles' sentiments can be considered anti-American, your desire to inhibit the expression of ideas is considered by many to be just as anti-American. My original response was to your quid pro quo response to the publication of Mr. Iles' frequent letters. Had you exercised your First Amendment rights more effectively by making a level-headed argument defending your position (whatever that may be) rather than stating that you withheld funds because of a series of letters that contained ideas not in line with your personal opinions, I might not have called your actions shameful. I am certain your opinions are worthy of respect, but when they are packaged in an angry, hastily written letter such as yours, these opinions become very difficult to take seriously – it would be like serving filet mignon in a Happy Meal box.

Mr. Essex, I am well aware of "what the hell" I am defending, and it's not Mr. Iles. I am defending freedom of speech for you and Mr. Iles alike, and for that, I have no regrets.

Bob Ell  
Alumnus

### Instead of CDC cuts, Dixon should consider cutting Index funds

I think President Dixon should also look at cutting the funds spent printing the Index. The Index does not represent quality journalism in my opinion. Misspelled words and selective reporting should not be acceptable from a "quality" institution of higher learning. It should always be open-minded and impartial to truly teach the principles of our democracy.

There is no reason to distribute the Index to the community at taxpayer expense. It is a Truman publication for Truman students, not a community paper.

Vance Myers  
Kirksville Resident

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### Web poll

**Should student athletes accused of crimes be suspended from their respective teams?**

**Jan. 24 Results**  
as of midnight Tuesday

51% (102)

Yes. The subsequent investigation could drag down an entire team.

49% (101)

No. Defendants are innocent until proven guilty.

vote online at  
[www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com)

**THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:** Almost a month into 2006, how are your New Year's resolutions progressing?

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*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.

## Index corrections

- The pulled quote on Page 8 of the Jan. 19 issue of the Index was incorrectly attributed to Kirksville Mayor Martha Rowe. Councilman Ralph Cupelli was the speaker.

## 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.