

Professors careful not to cross the line

Sara Miller
for the Index

When senior Kirsten Brimer sees one of her professors at a bar or party, she doesn't think twice.

"I immediately would go up to the professor and say hi and sit and chat with them," Brimer said.

She said she has never thought of socializing with professors as weird or inappropriate.

"Obviously they're people too," Brimer said. "They have other things that they do socially outside of teaching."

Getting to know professors outside the school environment is beneficial, she said.

"You get a different outlook from somebody who's older and wiser," Brimer said. "A lot of people who I consider myself friends with — who are professors — are my mentors. I look up to them and respect their intelligence and ability to work with students at the level they do."

Martin Jayne, associate professor of justice systems, said he considers himself friends with several students. He said the opportunity to become better acquainted with students is one of the reasons he enjoys teaching.

"For me, it just makes teaching more fun," Jayne said. "I do this because I enjoy working with young folks, certainly not for the paycheck."

Most of his friendships develop through activities on campus like athletic events, student research projects and exercising at

the Student Recreation Center, he said.

Jayne said there are two main advantages of professor and student friendships.

"One is just for the student to have someplace to go that's more like home off campus and have a home-cooked meal, a place to fish or those kind of things," Jayne said. "The other one, I think, is it provides a good opportunity for discussion about careers and those types of things. It's probably easier in a social setting than just coming up to sit in the office."

Jayne met senior Adam Petry through a research project on tracking bobcats. The chance to discuss careers is a major benefit of student and professor friendships, Petry said.

"It exposes you to a certain, specific profession and that career and those decisions," Petry said.

He said his adviser is mentoring him through his research. He values the way his adviser knows when to provide guidance and direction but also when to step back and give him freedom, Petry said.

Although age has not been a factor in his friendships with professors, he said he does think younger professors are easier for students to relate to both outside and inside the classroom.

"They're talking our language," Petry said. "That's what students ultimately want, someone who can pass on the information while doing it through an effective medium."

He said he thinks seeing a professor at the bars is great.

"I would never want to put myself in a situation where the line could be crossed."

James Cianciola
Assistant Professor of
Communication



Sophomores Alison Peterson and Brooke Clifton speak with James Pauls, professor of art, Monday afternoon. Some students said they benefit from friendly relationships with faculty. However, some professors express the importance of being careful not to cross the line.

Lisa Margetis/Index

"We shouldn't rule ourselves with what we should and shouldn't do," Petry said. "We're here to learn, and we're here to transmit knowledge, and damn it, if you want to learn knowledge on a Friday night at the Dukum, do it."

However, James Cianciola, assistant professor of communication, said his educational experience has taught him to be very careful about crossing the line with students. He is new to Truman this year, and he said that although he likes to go out and have fun, he's always a little cautious.

"I would never want to put myself in a situation where the line could be crossed because you could lose everything, your credibility in the classroom," Cianciola said.

Professor and student friendships are complicated because friendships exist on many levels, he said.

"The term friendship is like the term

love or other terms that we have that are sort of ambiguous," Cianciola said. "My friendships with students are unique in the sense that it's a different relationship. It's more like a mentor/mentee relationship."

Professor and student friendships don't develop through deliberate decisions but rather unconsciously with time, he said.

"We form friendships through things like identification, and that happens naturally," he said.

Learning that you like the same kind of music as a student or asking what's going on in his or her life makes a better teacher, he said.

"I believe in audience-centered discourse, so I should know my audience," Cianciola said.

Truman presents a unique situation for student and faculty interaction because it's in a small community, he said.

Students and faculty interact all the

time, he said. When he goes out for a cup of coffee, he sees students, and when he grabs a burger, he sees students, he said.

He said he thinks students are aware of the implicit boundaries on student and faculty relationships.

"Although I'm the furthest thing from [an] authoritarian, there still is — no matter how much we want to reconceptualize power — there still is an authority relationship," he said.

Cianciola said that although there are benefits in developing friendship-type relationships with students, he must always place his role as a teacher above his personal agenda.

"I take my job very seriously, and I take my students very seriously, and I take this institution very seriously," Cianciola said. "I'm a representative of this institution no matter where I go, and I want to represent this place and its values properly."

Program warms homes for those in need during winter

Energy assistance program is designed to aid residents who have little income

Maggie Wolcott
Staff Reporter

Kirkville resident Sherry Piland said living in a trailer without enough money to pay for heating is a different world.

Piland has applied for financial assistance to help with her heating bills this winter.

"It is hard to realize unless you are there, and I happen to be here right now," she said.

The Missouri Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program helps pay for heating bills from October to March.

Low-income individuals can apply at Northeast Missouri Community Action Agency centers in Adair, Knox, Clark, Schuyler and Scotland counties.

Evelyn Ledford, Adair County service center manager for NMCAA, said LIHEAP has both a regular energy assistance program and a crisis energy assistance program.

Ledford said she really likes LIHEAP because it is truly based on income. She said most applicants who meet the income requirement will qualify to receive assistance.

Piland said she went from earning a good salary to having no income.

She said she has a bachelor's degree in nursing and made \$50,000 the last year she worked. Because of a chronic back problem and fibromyalgia, Piland said it is hard for her to get out of bed some days, and she has not been able to work for the past three years.

Medicaid covers the cost of her medicines, which run about \$1,800 a month, Piland said.

People who live on fixed incomes and pay for their medicines cannot compensate for the increase in energy costs, she said.

"They literally make a choice between food, medication, doctor's visits that they need and whether they are going to heat their home or not," Piland said.

She said energy assistance has become absolutely critical for her.

"If I don't [receive energy assistance], I guess I'm going to be cold," Piland said. "There are no other options."

Ledford said most of the people who apply for assistance are elderly people living on Social Security. Needy families and college students also have received assistance based on their income levels, she said.

The maximum amount of money participants can receive from LIHEAP is \$600, Ledford said.

A long cold winter season with high energy costs presents problems for some people, Ledford said.

"The \$600 for people who are on a low fixed income isn't going very far," Ledford said. "They really need to learn to budget their resources, not only their money."

LIHEAP defines a crisis situation as either a shut-off, a discount of energy or 20 percent or less propane left in a propane tank, Ledford said. Crisis applications are given priority, and if applicants provide the correct informa-

tion, they should be reconnected the same day, she said.

The state monitors all the funding, and it is impossible for recipients to "double dip" and receive more than the maximum amount allotted, she said. Also, all the money goes straight to the vendor to pay the bills, not to the participant, Ledford said.

AmerenUE customers might be able to receive assistance through the Dollar More program. AmerenUE customers

who agree to pay a dollar more on their electric bill to help people who can't afford to pay their bills fund this program. Ledford said recipients of Dollar More funding only can receive assistance once a year.

Ledford said her job can be stressful, and she often worries about the clients, but she also realizes how important it is.

"You have those people who truly appreciate it, and that makes your day," Ledford said.

Mary Lee Bailey, director of family and community development for NMCCA, said their offices have been overwhelmed with applicants this fall.

She said from Oct. 1 to Nov. 7, 698 people have applied for energy assistance through the agency.

"A surprising amount of people in our area do not have access to funds for heating," Bailey said. "Lower-income families use a disproportionate amount of their income for heating compared to the rest of their population."

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May Lee Bailey
Director at NMCCA

Requirements for heat assistance

1. Must be responsible for paying home heating costs
2. Must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident
3. Must not have available resources in excess of \$3,000
4. Household must not exceed following incomes:

Household Members:	Monthly Income Limit:
1	\$969
2	\$1,301
3	\$1,632
4	\$1,963
5	\$2,294
6	\$2,626
7	\$2,957
8	\$3,288

Design by Lindsay Koski/Index

Applicants who apply for funding often use propane and have homes that are difficult to heat, Bailey said. Propane presents a problem for low-income individuals because the usual minimum delivery of at least 200 gallons can cost more than \$300, she said.

This is a large amount of money to put up front, Bailey said, and the propane might last only a month or a month and a half.

Bailey said the agency does not always have enough resources to meet the needs. She said it ran out of funds

for energy assistance at the end of last winter. The agency was able to pull funds from other sources that support different programs to help with energy assistance.

Bailey said the U.S. Congress had not set the budget yet for the energy assistance programs for the year.

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