

## OUR VIEW

## Senate's decision to host, fund conference is unwise

An examination of the aims of Saturday's student government conference (see story, Page 2), funded entirely by Student Senate, should be prefaced with a note of slight praise. It is admirable that Senate is attempting to improve relations with other publicly funded higher-education institutions in the state. Senate extended invitations to all 12 schools, but only three — Missouri State University (Springfield), Missouri Western State University (St. Joseph) and the University of Missouri-St. Louis — have committed to attend. This is where the conference's problems begin.

Senate has earmarked more than \$1,800 in student-government money — funds that come directly from the student body's \$2 per student per semester fee — to fund the conference. Though Senate is asking each participant to pay a \$25 fee to offset various costs, it is unclear what the enormous \$1,800 price tag is allotted for.

What is clear, however, is that more than \$500 of Truman students' money is being spent on a magician. And although spending this amount of money to entertain a small number of people is questionable, Senate originally planned to close the performance to University students not affiliated with Senate. Senate only decided to open it to the public Wednesday night in executive session.

The conference agenda shows further ill use of student funding. Visiting senators will be served breakfast, lunch and dinner on Truman students' dime. The conference begins at 10 a.m. and lasts

until 10 p.m., but less than half of that time is allocated for presentations and discussion.

Finally, the crux of the conference — approving a resolution maintaining that the attending schools' student governments will commit to pursuing more adequate state funding — is not only incredibly vague, but it also still is on shaky footing.

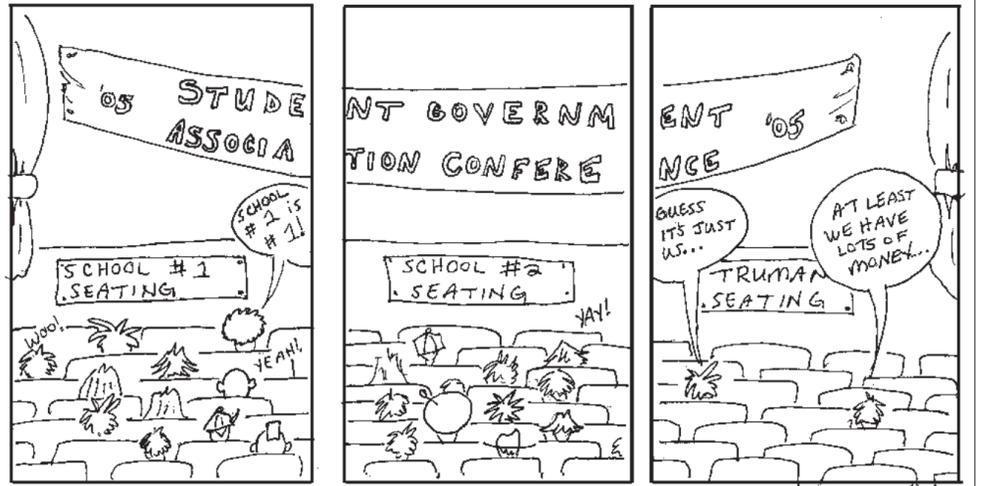
At Sunday's Senate meeting, a motion was brought to the floor that would authorize four student senators to act on behalf of Senate to bargain with other schools' representatives, with the aim of agreeing on a final version of the resolution at the conference Saturday. But Senate voted down the authorizing motion Sunday. Senate President Mark Kirtland and Speaker Michael Pierson chose not to call an emergency meeting to approve the resolution this week, and thus the University's student government representatives will now be serving an "advisory" role instead of the original plan of officially commissioning those senators via formal resolution.

We applaud those senators who have rightfully pointed out that this conference, while well-intentioned, is ill-advised at this point. Missouri State University is hosting a conference with identical aims in the spring. At this point, it is too late for Senate to cancel the conference because travel plans already have been made. But the choice to proceed simply is another irresponsible fiscal decision made by the students' elected representatives.

**Though Senate is asking each participant to pay a \$25 fee ... it is unclear what the enormous price tag is for.**

## Truville

Perrin Carrell/cartoonist



## Letters to the Editor

### Columnist's take on War on Terror was based on misrepresentations

Although I understand that a decent college newspaper ought to represent a myriad of student opinions, I had a difficult time stomaching the ideological garbage present in Josh Fenton's column [Oct. 27 issue of the Index]. His column is so full of factual misrepresentations and simple overlooking of facts in evidence that it is a disservice to the paper as a whole.

From what I can discern, his column's point is that we should not take what the media tells us at face value, and he applies this to what he thinks is a sketchy case against Osama bin Laden as the mastermind behind 9/11. He says that we have "taken the word of a madman" and used that to expend a \$2.178 trillion budget on foreign policy engagements and not come up with any more evidence linking Osama to these crimes. I would encourage Mr. Fenton to read the comprehensive 9/11 Commission Report. It is such an obvious source of information regarding Osama's involvement in 9/11, yet one totally overlooked and unmentioned in the column.

Further, Mr. Fenton seems to suggest that our whole budget goes to just three agencies dedicated to fighting the War on Terrorism (the NSA, the CIA and the "FBA"). In reality, only a percentage of the federal budget goes to the military, the rest being earmarked for programs like Social Security. And, the actual budgets of the CIA and NSA are highly classified so no one can really know how much is spent.

Finally, Mr. Fenton states that "whether or not Osama is the mastermind behind Sept. 11 ... what we've done in the Middle East is a good thing." The statement seems to me a gross perversion of "the ends justifying the means" because if Osama wasn't involved in 9/11, the action that the U.S. has engaged in is an illegal police action designed to nation-build in Islamic countries.

Under scrutiny of the sort that Mr. Fenton is advocating, his entire column fails to live up to even the loosest standards of research and reporting.

Rachael Spavone  
Senior

### Letter contained errors about international students, Sodexho

I am writing in response to the letter to the editor in the Oct. 20 Index to address some of his questions and factual errors. Daniel, you are right. Most of the Sodexho workers in the evenings and on weekends are international students. If you were to talk to some international students, you would find that most also have other jobs somewhere on campus. I know international students who work as a night monitor, for a professor, in the library or for facilities on the weekends. These jobs are directly from the University (either for scholarship hours or institutional pay), unlike Sodexho. You cannot work scholarship hours with Sodexho. Sodexho is a private company that manages food service for the University on a contract basis.

As a private business, they have different policies. Sodexho allows students to work more than 20 hours a week (unlike the University). The reason international students work in food service is because for many, this is the only job option where they can work more than 20 hours weekly and receive more than \$5.30/hour (University student pay rate) as compensation. Many students would probably prefer to work off campus because more opportunities exist, but to do this, one must have a work permit

from the INS, which is only available after being in the country for more than a year.

I appreciate your concern for international students. However, choosing to study overseas is often choosing to work to support oneself because costs are much higher. If you feel so strongly for increasing the diversity of food service, I suggest you apply with Sodexho because they probably need more help.

Jason Hull  
Senior

### Houston's column flawed by a misidentification of 'sport'

I disagree with the article "Editor struggles to find the true definition of sport" by Ross Houston in the Oct. 20 issue of the Index. He did not go through the proper channels to get accurate information. Some games being called sport are open to interpretation, but the interpretation cannot be as wide as he implies.

The context Mr. Houston was defining in sport did not fit his definition. He actually defined games, which are often used to mean sport. Games are defined as playful competition. The outcome can be determined by chance, strategy, physical skill, or any combination of these. Poker is a combination of chance and strategy. Physical skill does not affect the outcome of the game. Remember, all sports are games, but not all games are sports.

Sport, a sub-category of games, must be competitive. Physical skill must be a factor in determining the outcome. Games like poker and chess, though very honorable games, cannot be considered sport because they require strategy and intellect. NASCAR is considered a sport because the drivers' physical strength and ability contribute to how they drive the cars at speeds exceeding 180 mph.

The physical factor of sports is where the uncertainty of the definition of sport is mostly located. Many would say that games considered to be sport involve strength and/or endurance to win. Other people believe refined motor skills should be included in this category. These arguments are used to support games like billiards and darts under the sport category. This, I believe, is where personal opinions take over.

Mr. Houston made a common mistake in defining sport. Because "game" and "sport" are very similar, he gave you an excellent definition of games, though he related it closely to sport. I hope I have given a more insightful definition.

Kim Ater  
Freshman

### In-depth examination of Wal-Mart showed good, bad of retail giant

Thank you, Index, for your partly fair and somewhat accurate article on Wal-Mart's domination of Kirksville's economy! [In-depth, Oct. 20 issue of the Index] And thank you for leaving plenty of copies at the store for all of us employees to read. However, boycott of the largest U.S. retailer is really an extreme measure that one would hope to be substantiated by more considerable reasons than competitive edge or union affiliation.

Competition and free choice are true America, and they keep businesses and even universities viable. Unions have their good and bad, but no one can speak as well as that individual who secures for herself the work and respect afforded by our larger society. Unfortunately NYSE traded firms such as General Motors have been brought

to their knees by an organized mayhem. In their unions these workers have demanded and received full retirement security beyond their overinflated wages, which were already ample to secure retirement if invested wisely. Why should they demand to be worth more than fellow citizens with college degrees? Talk about unmitigated greed. The joke in the industry is that a GM product is too expensive to make or sell and too low in quality to compete with foreign products.

We vacationed in Vermont a few years ago and noticed that the pristine beauty of the countryside was not littered with the view of big box stores like Home Depot, Circuit City, Lowe's or even large malls. All of the natives told us of their hatred for them. But what other state would trade places with this economic giant? I applaud freedom and beauty. After all, we came to Kirksville by free choice years ago for the purpose of getting out of the atmosphere of St. Louis to live on 200 beautiful acres. If you want the big stores and malls, you have to take the apples with spots on them, too.

There is no way to return to village-square America with all private shops, which may have to overcharge to stay in business. Now when people overpay, they want something extra for their buck, be it convenience of long store hours or one-stop shopping. Compare prices at any quick shop to find out why people shop where they do.

Paul Walker  
Kirksville Resident

### Criticism of Wal-Mart's treatment of its employees is well-founded

Sam Walton founded Wal-Mart on the belief that all associates should be valued. As a former Wal-Mart associate, I agree with several things that were said in last week's article "Students, professors boycott retail giant for multitude of reasons." It's true that Wal-Mart associates are treated unfairly.

At the Kirksville Wal-Mart, generally no associate gets to work 40 hours a week. However, salaried management often work between 45 to 50 hours. The associates get anywhere from 32 hours to 38 hours a week, with full-time status beginning at 32 hours a week. Wal-Mart keeps employee hours below 40 because they don't want to risk the chance of anyone getting overtime. By cutting the workweek at 38 hours, it gives Wal-Mart 2 hours of leverage that they can use before they must pay time and a half. I had talked to people at the Wal-Mart back in my hometown, and they said they get 40 hours a week, and sometimes 50 to 60 hours during the holidays. The store also had part-time associates receiving full-time hours. I was listed as part-time working full-time hours for more two months. By keeping my status at part-time, I wasn't allowed vacation days and was given a much longer time period before I was eligible for insurance.

My final comment rests with the lack of comments from the Wal-Mart managers. If you notice when reading all the articles published last week, there was only one time where a manager actually commented on the story. That comment was made by Thomas Pierce in the article about Wal-Mart's charitable contributions. From the lack of comments by management, it led me as a reader to wonder why they didn't have anything to say. As a former employee, I knew why they didn't comment: because they had nothing good to say.

Dustin Engels  
Senior

## INDEX Web poll

What is your opinion of Wal-Mart?

### Oct. 25 Results

as of midnight Tuesday



**THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:** Are you planning to attend the Cake concert on Friday?

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

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## 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

- Senior Stian Gundersen was misidentified as a freshman on Page 22 of the Oct. 20 issue of the Index.

## 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.