

# Political parties harm Student Senate



Alex Hayden

Student Senate elections are coming up. And although some students might not care about student politics, I find myself pondering both the upcoming elections and student government as a whole. I find myself wondering about how student politics is really set up. Specifically, I am curious about the need for student-run political parties in student government. Before I go any further, however, I want to say this is not an attack. Although I seem to be talking directly about the student party system here on campus, this would be a distortion of my point. Instead,

I am noting a concern for all student government, and any attempts to isolate it to one group would be a perversion of the point I am making. This warning being posted, I feel more comfortable when I say I think student-run political parties actually hinder the intended purpose of student politics. Student politics is supposed to be the ground on which a marketplace of ideas sits. Student politics is supposed to foster discussion about different ideas instead of stifling it. Student politics is supposed to be about expressing voices, not silencing them. Yet, in any form of party system, there always is going to be silence. By this I do not mean that a student party intentionally or forcefully silences its members. Instead, I mean that student parties unknowingly silence party members. Do you recall the phrase "silence is consent"? Well, student politics also operates under this concept.

Let us say, for example, that a member of a single party disagrees with what is being done and actually finds the courage to voice his or her opinion so that a change can be made. Without a motion to second that person's voice, it remains unheard. It is here that student parties hinder student politics. If even one person seconds the motion, it will be heard. Yet, if people dissent from their party by seconding the motion, they could be cast out from their own party just for wanting to hear another position. They are not even passing an amendment or making new legislation. They simply are supporting the belief that the idea of another should be heard. But from feelings of either fear or obligation to their student party, the few will remain silent, thus consenting to the silencing of another. How, then, may we enter a realm closer to the ideal of student politics? How can we allow for the fostering

and trading of ideas to further our institution? As odd as it might sound, I suggest we move away from student party systems at Truman. In fact, I think our Senate should ban the formation of student parties on campus. Ironic though it is, we could gain a lot and lose little by leaving the era of party systems behind. Instead, have everyone run as independents with their own agendas. This will guarantee that potential student senators can voice their own opinions and run on their own platforms, as opposed to a party's platform. More importantly, it will allow for student senators to express themselves in Senate and become direct representatives of their student body instead of their student party. I'm sure by now you've already begun to think, "Alex, what is to keep students from just happening to run together and promote each other but never actually form a party?" My answer: There is no reason that students

cannot form small caucuses together if they hold to the same platform and beliefs. The difference, however, is that in a student party system, one feels an obligation to his or her party. Running mates, on the other hand, can promote each other, but they do not have the same level of obligation after an election as a party has. In this way, a student senator still can feel free to voice opinions in Senate. Because independence in campaigning puts running mates on an equal platform, as opposed to being under the student party banner, student senators can feel free to fully express their voices and support the voices of others. In other words, the voice of the minority will never be pressed into "silence is consent."

Alex Hayden is a senior philosophy and religion and communication major from Jefferson City, Mo.

### AROUND THE QUAD

What is one change that you would make to the LSP?



**"I would make Introduction to Linguistics a requirement."**

*Devin Tressler  
Senior*



**"Make Drawing I count for the aesthetic mode of inquiry."**

*Ed Kymes  
Senior*



**"I like the LSP requirements. They never caused any problems for me."**

*Kendal Geno  
Junior*



**"Require an economics course — it would be interdisciplinary and be useful for life."**

*Elisabeth O'Brien  
Sophomore*

## Greek Week needs revamping to achieve its ideal of Greek unity



Nathan Atkinson

Greek Week: a week each spring when Greeks come together to get to know one another better, do service, raise money for philanthropy and, above all, have fun while doing these things. The ideal of the week is to do all that while promoting Greek unity and a positive image for Greeks. Currently this is accomplished by forming Greek organizations into teams that compete to win Greek Week. Points are earned by participating in or attending events such as lip sync, skits, philanthropic events, Greek Olympics and a unity stroll. For non-Greeks who participate in Homecoming, it is a lot like that. I love Greek Week. But its purpose and ideal are only partially fulfilled by the current way we do things. Not to say the event is bad now, but I propose a somewhat radical solution that would better help us attain the ideal of Greek Week. First off, we should get rid of the competitive team structure that exists now. Competition does not foster unity among all the organizations. It is not the "insert color here"

team week, it is the all-encompassing Greek Week, which in my mind should mean as little division as possible. Currently, the hope is that members of organizations on the same team get to know one another better, but as many who have participated in Greek Week would agree, that often doesn't happen. Second, even more emphasis should be placed on philanthropy and service. We do great in these areas already, but we should do even better by starting earlier, like at the beginning of spring semester. Don't think I am saying that those who put together the philanthropic events don't do a good job — they have done a great job. What I am saying is that even more resources should be diverted to the philanthropic efforts. As for the competitive events during Greek Week, such as the lip sync, skits and the 5K, I think they should remain but in an altered form. Instead of winning points for these events, non-competitive teams that participate in and place in the event should receive the ticket sales money to go toward their individual philanthropies. Although some level of competitiveness would inevitably remain, I think it would be better focused on solely raising money for philanthropy as opposed to winning Greek Week. Next, we simply should have fun. The philanthropy events should be fun, we should continue to have

events such as the barbecue, and we should be encouraged to hang out more together during Greek Week and during the entire semester leading up to it. We should hang out more as teams and as a Greek system in general. Right now I do not think that the ideal of Greek unity being realized. We do sometimes get closer to the other members of our team during Greek Week, but by and large this does not usually last past the week. I think philanthropy is the key to achieving Greek unity. Every organization does philanthropic work and wants to raise money for its philanthropy and for other philanthropies as well. Doing philanthropy, having fun and hanging out together would result in Greek unity and a better image for the Greek community, which is, after all, the purpose of Greek Week. The ideals of Greek Week might be achieved by other means, and that is fine. It is not as much about the method by which you strive for the ideal, but the concerted effort to reach the ideal itself. At the very least we must keep in mind that the purpose of Greek Week is not to win it but to promote unity, serve humanity and support a positive image for the Greek system.

Nathan Atkinson is a senior political science and philosophy and religion major from Glasgow, Mo.

## Graduates should move beyond Missouri to achieve greatness



Daniel Glossenger

Live long and prosper, soon-to-be Truman graduates. There are 30 days and counting until graduation, when the rest of your life begins. And I just threw up in my mouth a little bit at that last little cliché, so let's cut to the chase about what you need to do after you graduate: Get the heck out of Dodge. I mean it. Leave Kirksville, leave St. Louis and leave Kansas City — leave Missouri and don't ever come back. I don't care if you've lived in the cloistered world of Ballwin since way back in the days of Reagan. Get out and go to the real world. By the real world, I don't mean a real job as an entry-level financial consultant at Wachovia, a health technician at Barnes-Jewish or as a schoolteacher in suburban St. Louis County. I mean the real, real world — Los Angeles, New York City and the ever-enticing Chicago. Why depart magical Missouri, with its bucolic landscape, the City of Fountains and the largest arch in the land? Clearly, the Show-Me State has some

redeeming value, right? Of course. But it's not for you, darlings. For you, the world is your oyster — so go where actual oysters live, rather than to a suburb of a middling city in a middling state. Go where your education at Truman will shine the light of knowledge into shadows where our fine University's name never has been seen. But I'm not asking you to do this just for grins and giggles. I'm selfish, after all. If you, Mr. or Ms. Successful Truman Graduate, go out and make a good name for yourself, then it's going make a good name for Truman. And if you give Truman a good name, then it gives everyone's degree a good name, which always is a good thing. Take Alphonso Jackson, secretary for Housing and Urban Development. He became famous after leaving Truman with bachelor's and master's degrees in hand. Granted, he'll probably face Congressional investigation and permanent disdain for his role in scandals left and right. But he darn well made a name for himself. The key for you will be to balance becoming renowned and respected with not being a complete political lackey. That's why I just suggest going to a big city for starters, but take care to work your way up the ranks cleanly. There's something in it for you, too. There's more opportunity for advancement in a big city, and Truman needs more graduates who will go beyond

their comfort zones for the cause of fame and fortune. Right now, among our most famous students are, in no particular order, Jenna Fischer (from "The Office"), Cain (the WWE entertainer) and General John J. Pershing of World War I fame. Pershing, by the way, attended school here only for a brief time before deciding he'd get a better education somewhere else — the U.S. Military Academy. He was last enrolled here during the Chester A. Arthur administration. I hope now it's clear we need some bigger names coming out of here more often. Here's a final reason why it's important to go beyond the borders of this state: It fulfills the mission of Truman. We're a state school, yes, but we're also a liberal arts institution. Liberal arts is about expanding the breadth of one's knowledge and celebrating and understanding other cultures and people. Now, I know that the Bootheel is very much its own culture, and Northeast Missouri is home to a very special sort of people. But moving away from your comfort zone means you'll grow. You're a big fish in a little pond if you go back to St. Louis, so give yourself some room and head off into the wild blue yonder. It won't bite — hard.

Daniel Glossenger is a senior history major from Nashville, Tenn.

## Board of Governors' activity fee increase ignored student voice



Brenna McDermott

I paid a \$72 Student Activity Fee this year. Every three years the Organizational Activities Fee Review Committee, made up of appointed and elected students, determines whether that fee should be raised, lowered or kept the same. The OAF produces a recommendation, which Student Senate usually accepts, then the recommendation is put on the spring Senate ballot for students to vote on. The Board of Governors has the final say on what the Student Activities Fee will be, but it normally approves what the students vote for. The money then is split up among the Collegiate Readership Program, Student Activities Board, Funds Allotment Council and Student Senate. Think about what this money gets you: \$72 to see OK Go, hello goodbye and Demetri Martin at drastically reduced prices. To see comedians Jen Kober and Finesse Mitchell, blockbuster movies such as "There Will Be Blood," "Hairspray," "Atonement," "Juno" and "National Treasure 2" and to be a part of many other amazing activities this year. To get a daily newspaper and to be represented by the voices of elected students. In other words, for \$72, we've got a pretty good deal going on here at Truman.

After all, it isn't the Board of Governors Activity Fee. Without asking the students how much they think they should pay for activities on campus, how can anyone know what is really appropriate? I'm not upset because I'm a tightwad. I'm upset because I would be in favor of raising the fee even more — that means I get more popular bands, more famous comedians and more exciting activities more often. However, I'm not in favor of raising the fee for these things without a vote by the students. The question really is should the Board of Governors unilaterally raise student-approved fees without the approval of students? If the Board of Governors knew it had to make a budgetary decision earlier than in past years, shouldn't it have informed Senate and the OAF that they would need to make a proposal in time to meet the deadline? I am not OK with this, and I don't think other students will be, either. And the Board of Governors should know that. I'm not saying that students should get a voice in how much everything should cost. If the Board of Governors asked students what a fair tuition price would be, well, that would be pointless. We would want it to be as cheap as possible, and how could we know what a fair estimate would be for the countless number of expenses that go into tuition fees? But we do know exactly how many and what kind of events on campus we attend. We know whether events have been awesome or crappy, we know what a daily newspaper is worth to us and we are the only people on this campus who have a relevant idea of what the Student Activities Fee should be. The Board of Governors have a responsibility to the students to find out what each of us thinks. After all, without us, there would be no Board of Governors and no Truman. If we all keep working things out on our own, thinking each group knows best, we, as the Truman community, will not get very far. Communication is the key to keeping problems like this from happening. Maybe we can't control the mandated increase of \$1.50, but hopefully those in charge will think twice before omitting our opinions again.

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So I am more than happy to pay this fee. What I am not so thrilled about is that this year is that my Student Activity Fee will be raised \$1.50, but not because of the OAF's recommendation, which is based on students' opinions. The powers that be have decided that I do not get a say in what my Student Activity Fee should be this year. And I see a few problems with this situation. Due to time constraints, the Board of Governors has gone ahead and increased the Student Activity Fee by \$1.50. Whatever happened to asking the students how much they want to pay for concerts, activities and newspapers? Ultimately, it is the Board of Governors' decision to make, but making that decision without incorporating students' input is a little silly.

**Making the decision to raise the fee without student input was a little silly. After all, it isn't called the Board of Governors Activity Fee.**

