

# Viewing goes high-def

BY SARAH SCOTT  
for the Index

Television viewing is about to change.

The FCC has mandated that all television signals — which are broadcast through a transmitter to a TV set — must be digital by Feb. 17, 2009. Matt Farwell, assistant director of ITS, said Truman does not have much to worry about because all televisions on campus are already digital and capable of high-definition broadcasting.

“There is essentially no impact for Truman, and this doesn’t impact cable or satellite users,” Farwell said.

Joann King, the general manager of Cable One in Kirksville, said the FCC started this process in 1996 and set a deadline of February 2009.

“The only people impacted by this are those with antennas,” Farwell said.

King said she estimates the majority of Kirksville’s population already subscribes to cable and therefore won’t be affected by the change. She said about 40 percent of those who don’t subscribe to cable have dishes.

King explained that the reason those who are subscribing to a cable or satellite company won’t

have to do anything for the change is because the companies are converting the signal for their customers before sending it out. She also said some people who subscribe to satellite television might have to buy a converter box because local channels are not included in the conversions provided by their satellite company.

King said Cable One had to purchase new equipment to convert signals for its customers.

The small broadcasting stations probably will take the hardest hit from this change because they will have to purchase millions of dollars of equipment, she said.

“The government forced us into this,” King said.

The reason for the switch to digital broadcasting is to provide the opportunity for a clearer picture and more channel options, according to the TV Converter Box Program’s Web site. Another reason the TV Converter Box Program gave for the switch is that once television broadcasts change out of analog, the analog space can be used for emergency services, such as fire rescue or police.

King also said that after the switch, the government will auction off the remaining space on the analog channel not allotted for the emergency channels.

“They’ll probably make billions of dollars,” King said.

A television connected to cable, satellite or other television services that are paid for does not require a converter box, according to the TV Converter Box Program’s Web site.

There are three options for those who do not have digital or satellite connections, according to the Web site.

The first option is to purchase a TV converter box. Congress has created a TV Converter Box Coupon Program that allows households to obtain \$40 coupons to help purchase the converter boxes.

King said she estimates the boxes will cost between \$50 and \$70 each, before the coupons are applied.

The second option the program gave is to connect to a pay service, such as cable or satellite, and the third is to purchase a digital television.

“We’ve got a lot of people wanting more, or new, televisions than before,” said Brian Lee, who works at King’s Appliance. He explained that most people would rather purchase a new television than mess with the converter box.

King guessed 80 percent of televisions in use are still analog. She said she thinks all sets sold



Freshman Logan Frame watches high-definition television on the third floor of Missouri Hall.

before 2007 are analog.

“You might have a wide-screen, hi-def, LCD in the living room but analog televisions in the kitchen and bedroom,” King said.

Dan Lammers, of King’s Appliance, said it is possible that a fee could be added to cable bills. Lammers explained that cable companies will have to convert all their signals before sending them to customers, so prices might go up.

King said there will be no price difference for Cable One customers in Kirksville.

Lammers also addressed the concern of television’s high-definition capabilities. He said his store stopped selling televisions that aren’t hi-def capable two or three years ago.

Truman’s television station will adapt to meet the requirements. At a Feb. 2 meeting, the Board of Governors discussed News 36’s analog equipment, some of which is three decades old. Only the station’s field cameras currently are digital. They discussed that although the studio does not broad-

cast live over the air, the digital upgrade will keep that possibility open in the future.

Truman’s radio station upgraded to hi-def last year. Adviser Mark Smith, associate professor of communication, said the cost for KTRM was about \$200,000. He said there is no time limit on radio’s conversion to a digital signal, but the station is ready for the eventual switch.

“Truman State had the foresight to update facilities that needed updating,” Smith said.

# Departments propose sweeping curriculum, procedure changes

## History might add major courses, MAE will start rolling admissions

BY CHRIS BONING  
Assistant News Editor

Change is in the wind for a pair of the University’s academic departments.

While the history department attempts to undertake its first-ever curriculum overhaul, the Master of Arts in Education program currently is revising its application process.

Thomas Zoumaras, professor of history, said a substantial number of changes have been proposed to the history department curriculum. If the proposal goes through, the curriculum would switch to a five-tier plan, he added. Zoumaras said the tiers consist of courses on world history, U.S. history, the continents, electives and a capstone.

He said the department decided on this template after conducting a five-year review during which certain concerns were raised. Chief among those was that history students don’t begin

with a broad enough knowledge base and that the liberal studies template isn’t serving its purpose, he added.

“We ... believe in a truly liberal arts institution that there should be a truly liberal arts philosophy where students are encouraged to explore different things, and they’re given instruments to explore different things,” Zoumaras said. “That’s what we think the liberal studies program should be. We don’t believe that’s the case — it really is pick one: column A, column B.”

He said the history department has proposed eliminating 15 credit hours of liberal studies support and increasing the number of classes required for the major.

Zoumaras said the proposal currently is going before all of the departmental heads. He added that if all goes as planned, the new curriculum could be added to the course catalogue by the 2009-10 academic year.

The history curriculum has been modified previously but not to the extent of what is being proposed, Zoumaras said. He added that the proposal is unique among other universities.

“To the best of my knowledge, it’s

pretty rare to have a program, in effect, be willing to scrap everything,” he said.

### Changes to the MAE

Susan LaGrassa, MAE admissions committee chair, said the proposed changes to the program are threefold: establishing a rolling admissions deadline, clarifying the requirements in specialty fields such as mathematics or special education and streamlining the overall application process.

She said the addition of a rolling deadline will permit students to submit their application materials on the first of any month rather than just two times a year. With this change, students will be able to get more timely feedback on their applications, LaGrassa added.

Clarifying specialty requirements will make it easier both for the students and for all those involved with approving MAE applications, she said. Many times, specialty areas have different requirements, but there is no effective system for letting students know what those are, LaGrassa added.

She said a streamlining of the overall application process is necessary as the length of time it takes to review an

application has been detrimental to the MAE program.

“Students don’t get notified quickly enough, and we lose some good students because they don’t hear quickly enough and have to make a decision about another school,” she said.

The bills proposing the changes are in the hands of the Graduate Council and eventually will be submitted before the Faculty Senate for final approval, LaGrassa said. If approved, the changes should be implemented by the fall 2008 semester and will not affect students who have already been admitted to the program, she added.

Faculty Senate president James Guffey, professor of mathematics, said as far as his organization is concerned, proposals for departmental curriculum changes are first sent before the Undergraduate Council or the Graduate Council, depending on which applies to the specific curriculum. The proposal then is presented before the rest of the Faculty Senate, which has the final legislative authority.

He said the extent of the proposed curriculum changes within the history de-

partment is unusual, Guffey said.

He added that the MAE program in general is unique because it often requires the cooperation of two separate academic departments and sometimes even the cooperation of both the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils for making decisions.

Guffey said the Faculty Senate takes its role in changing curriculums very seriously.

“In general, we try to be deliberate with any curricular changes that we make because we always want to be very careful to maintain the strength and the rigor, and so on, of our programs so that we can provide the best degree we possibly can,” he said.

Graduate MAE student Kara Beck said the process for applying to the program includes having all undergraduate classes in line, writing a personal statement and submitting recommendation letters from professors.

Beck said she was unaware of the proposals to the MAE but added that anything that would make the application process more efficient would be helpful.

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