

## OUR VIEW

# Renovation changes create a bright future

A little foresight can go a long way in the business of renovating rooms and dressing up dining halls, and thank goodness the University has begun to acknowledge it.

We were getting a little antsy about more residence hall renovations in light of the looks of the SUB and the “surprise” infrastructure problems in Blanton, Nason and Brewer halls. Obviously there’s nobody to blame for that surprise though — who’d a thunk it that a 60-year-old building would have plumbing problems? We also weren’t too confident we could handle a world without the Centennial or Ryle dining halls. The lunchtime crunch of students in those two dining halls when it was only the smaller Missouri Hall cafeteria that closed was an ominous sign of things to come.

But with a little foresight, the University — specifically, the Board of Governors and administrators — has decided to steer a course out of the path of the storm (see story, Page 1). The decision to extend both the Ryle and Centennial projects to two years each will avert major problems and makes sure that the jobs are going to be done right. But the biggest changes are to keep the dining halls open during the entire renovation process and to update the kitchens.

These changes will have an enormous impact on how students live in the next five to 10 years. Of course, it doesn’t matter much to current seniors. It probably won’t even affect most students now finishing up their first semester as Truman Bulldogs. Not too many third-year college students decide to live in residence halls, after all.

But to the class of 2013 — this year’s crop of high school juniors — this matters a whole heckuva lot. And in another way, it matters to every single graduate of Truman. The value of today’s Truman degrees substantially depends on the success of

the University’s future students. We’re banking that these future students not only will be academically talented, but also will graduate from Truman — and that’s the biggest reason these changes will have a lasting impact on our lives.

In other words, improving the quality of residence halls and bettering students’ quality of life by making it possible for them to eat where they live will improve retention rates.

Higher retention rates mean more graduates with degrees that say Truman, and more high-performance graduates with Truman degrees mean better chances that the Nobel laureates of 2042 or the Rhodes scholars of 2020 will include a Bulldog alumnus. That kind of publicity benefits anybody with a Truman degree, even members of the class of 2008.

The changes to the renovation plans don’t just mean better retention rates and the possibility of a famous graduate. By spending a little more time on the buildings, the builders can figure out ways to better the project as they go along and improve energy efficiency. But don’t take us for tree-hugging, overly optimistic environmentalists — there’s cash to be had in making our buildings green.

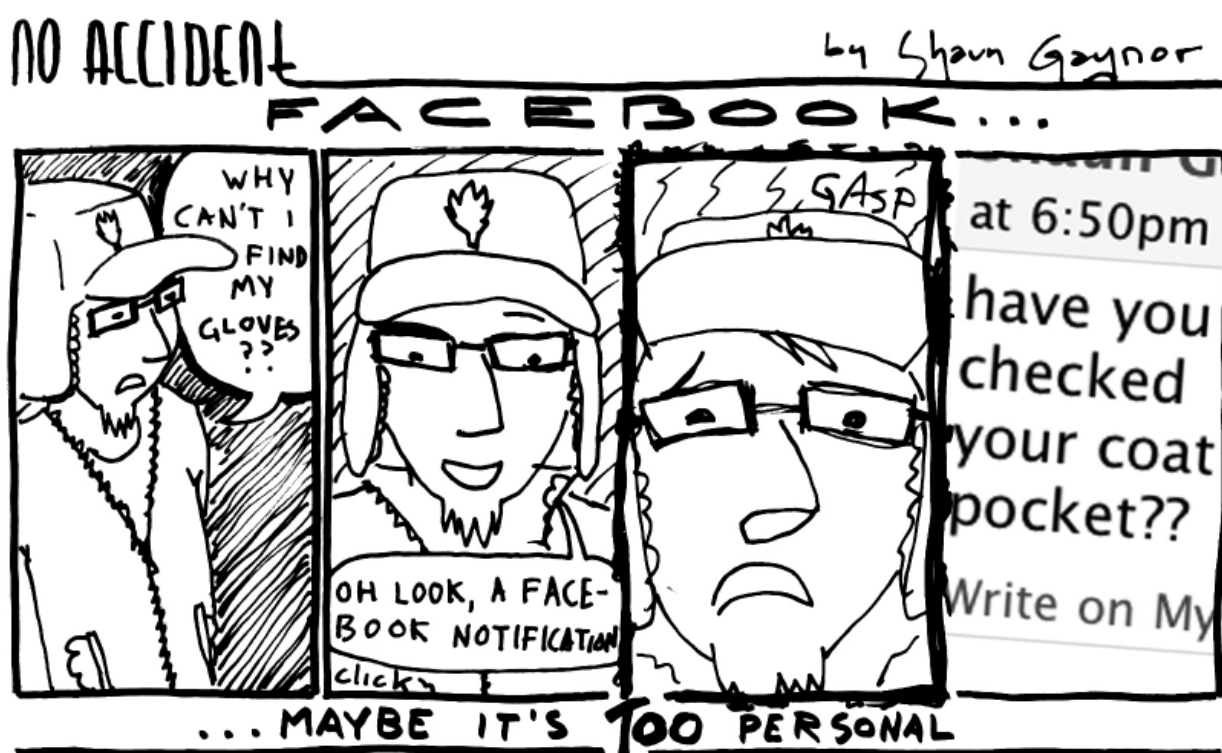
The cost of heating and cooling buildings the in 21st century will explode with higher prices of commodities such as petroleum, coal and natural gas. By reducing the amount of energy we use, we can reinvest that money into campus beautification and better faculty and staff salaries or even pass along the savings to energy-efficient campus residents.

With more change in the University piggy bank, better retention rates and the knowledge that we’ll be saving the planet, what more could we ask for? Kudos to you, Truman administrators and the Board of Governors. Keep up the good work.

### Kudos to you, Truman administrators and the Board of Governors.

## CORRECTIONS

- An article titled “‘Ugly Man’ returns to campus after four-year hiatus” on page 13 of the Nov. 29 Index was incorrect. The contest will be decided Thursday, Dec. 6, not Tuesday, Dec. 4.
- Two photograph bylines accompanying articles titled “Volleyball falls in South Central Regional finals” and “Women win again, 88-63” on page 15 of the Nov. 29 Index were incorrect. Jackson Groves should have been given credit for the volleyball photograph, and Jason Williams should have been given credit for the women’s basketball photograph.
- A photograph byline accompanying an article titled “Out-Reach donations help local community” on page 13 of the Nov. 29 Index was incorrect. The photographer’s name is Brian O’Shaughnessy.



## Letters to the Editor

### Professor’s letter reveals “weak” principles, ignores scientific facts

Professor Cynthia Cooper’s letter to the editor in the Nov. 29 issue of the Index attacks my letter and uses some of the most flawed and frightening arguments I have ever heard.

She chooses to ignore the conclusions of scientists in her own field in order to perpetuate her personal views. The ideas she presents as a defense for killing a human and for permitting dangerous and promiscuous sex employ weak principles and set double standards across the board.

First, although I respect Cooper as a teacher, she completely misrepresents the difference between being human and being alive. Of course the sperm and egg are biologically alive before fertilization, but that is not the issue. The issue is the point at which the egg genetically becomes a human being. However, the fact that a genetically independent person is created at conception is irrefutable.

Second, Cooper’s understanding of responsibility is quite troubling. She seems to think that we live in a consequence-free world in which our rational choices have no effects. She tries to take away the blame from women for getting pregnant by blaming it on passion or the influence of alcohol, implying that these are legitimate excuses. Perhaps, by that train of thought, we should not charge anyone for murder if they were under the influence of passion. The fact is our actions have consequences, and they cannot be ignored.

Finally, and most disturbing of all, is Cooper’s claim that a genetic human being is not a person like you or me. This seems to be used as a way to justify the killing of a human being. But when we take away a human’s personhood, we give ourselves the right to decide whether they live or die, and that is wrong. Professor Cooper should think long and hard about what ramifications that kind of thought can have on society.

Sean Cooksey  
Freshman

### More job-finding help needed for international students

My first semester at Truman is almost over, and I am really happy to be a part of the University. This is my bravest dream come true.

However, it will be helpful for all future international students to know that freshman year here is very difficult and that one of the hardest things is finding institutional job openings.

My friends and I started looking for work the third day after our arrival, but unfortunately, everyone told us that they already had hired people. Another problem was that there was an increase in the minimum wage so employers were not as willing to hire as many workers this year. Not being able to work for a whole semester is not an option for most international students, as their parents cannot provide all four years of tuition.

We were told by the other Bulgarian students here that they were able to find a job within several weeks of their arrival. Finding a job is a real challenge, and the University should make sure that future students, especially those from abroad, are aware of this.

Daniela Slivkova  
Freshman

### CAFO column doesn’t tell the whole story of meat production

If people choose not to eat meat, I respect their right to make that choice. However, I take issue with the reasons used in an article and a column in the Nov. 29 issue of the Index to attempt to convince others. I realize that college students are at the point in their lives when they are ripe for causes, even as they work to evaluate their own belief

systems. Been there, done that, and as the mother of two recent college graduates, I have been reminded of how formative the college years are. You need to try on lots of ideas in the process of getting educated. So I’d like to share my perspective with you.

I am an Iowa pork producer associated with many CAFOs, and my family has been raising hogs for more than 50 years. During that time, we’ve made many changes in our operations, including the type of animals we raise and the type of environment in which they are raised. When I joined this family some 27 years ago, we had a combination of animal housing methods. Some pigs were outdoors all their lives. Some were raised in buildings that were state-of-the-art at the time.

As the years have passed, we have a larger operation that today involves all the animals being housed indoors at a number of locations in a seven-county area. Local farmers are part of our team. I can say unequivocally that the conditions in which animals are raised in our operation today are superior to the conditions in which many Americans live, to say nothing of people worldwide.

Our pigs live in climate-controlled rooms that protect them from the hottest days and coldest nights. They are clean and have ready access to feed and water. When an individual pig gets lame or sick, they are segregated in a separate pen to enhance their likelihood of recovery. Those that are not likely to recover are euthanized promptly and do not suffer needlessly.

The people who care for the pigs receive continuing education on animal care, assuring that when antibiotics are used, they are used properly.

The manure that the animals generate is stored in concrete tanks until it is time to apply it to fertilize the soil. When it is applied, it’s incorporated into the soil to minimize nitrogen loss. Application rates are determined by the anticipated yields of the crop to come. All this information is documented and filed, should there be any question whether manure has been applied in an appropriate manner.

As producers, we live on the farms where our animals are raised, and we drink from the wells and have the primary contact with surface waters of the area. It would be foolish for us not to do what’s best for the animals and the environment.

If you would like to hear more about this side of the story of production agriculture, I would be available to visit with you further at your convenience. When you have more complete information, I fully support your right to choose and to share your beliefs with others.

Heidi Vitteoe  
Washington, Iowa

### Topping’s portrayal of Greek Life fails to show the big picture

Many of our members were peer-ing through the Nov. 29 issue of the Index to find what can only be described as a bold, one-sided attack on Greek Life written by Robert Topping. This uninformed diatribe attacked Greek Life as people sometimes perceive it — but Topping’s perception of the Greek system largely seems based on stereotypical college movies, such as Animal House or Van Wilder. Topping forces harsh words on the Greek system like “sexist” and “primitive,” and labels fraternities and sororities as “childish boys and girls clubs,” while failing to recognize all of the positive contributions these organizations make on a daily basis.

First of all, we would like to debate the most offending portion of Topping’s argument toward Greeks. He writes that “Greek systems, as they are gender-exclusive, illustrate a general primitive attitude that, one would hope, universities would set out to deconstruct.

... Greek organizations are, at their most basic, sexist.” Although Topping is correct about the fact that universities should deconstruct any sort of separation between men and women in a professional manner, one cannot disregard the fact that there are plenty of other gender-exclusive organizations that are considered perfectly acceptable and in some cases highly lauded, such as the Boys and Girls Scouts of America.

One thing that most people also fail to recognize is that most Greek organizations have committees that provide academic advisement and detailed tutoring systems for members who are struggling in school. It would be hard to make a case that Greek organizations fail to take care of their members.

Finally, Topping attacks Greek organizations when he states that they pummel their members with structural hierarchy and dues to support the argument that Greek students buy their friends. However, people are not paying for friendship in these organizations. They are paying for the events, both social and philanthropic, that their organizations take part in. You usually don’t join a Greek organization unless you feel like you can be friends with the people beforehand.

Not only are we Greeks not a detriment to Truman, we also benefit society as a whole. Greek undergraduates raise about \$7 million a year for charities, and the all-Greek GPA on campus is higher than the all-campus GPA. Truman should continue to accommodate Greek Life because these organizations benefit all of our college experiences.

The Men of Sigma Tau Gamma

### Funding request denials should include better explanations

The Funds Allotment Council recently sent the Graduate English Organization a letter saying that our request for funding to host a conference in the spring was denied.

According to FAC, our events “have not been successful in the past,” and it would not “bring diversity” to the campus. FAC also said graduate students represent too small a section of the student body to receive funding for our conference, which would bring speakers from across the country. Being outnumbered by undergraduate students by about 22:1, we certainly are a minority at Truman. This doesn’t stop other groups from getting funding, however. It would be discriminatory if we were a racial or ethnic minority, but we’re only a minority because of our pursuit of higher education.

After all, there is no worthy cause implied in our request, unless you count educating and challenging the student body to think critically a worthy-enough cause. On its Web site, the FAC says it is “dedicated to the intellectual and social development of students.” If our events are geared exactly for this, what went wrong? Oh, that’s right, we typically are “unsuccessful [and don’t] bring diversity.” Unsuccessful. Did they know that our recent poetry slam had more than 200 people in attendance throughout the night? Is bringing poetry, that hated-yet-invaluable form of literature, into popular culture considered meaningless? No diversity. With our focus being a blend of folklore and popular culture, how much more of an open-ended allotment for diversity do we need to provide?

FAC, what is this ideal successful and diverse organization that you are comparing everyone to, and is this practice truly pertinent and valuable? Furthermore, why are you promoting these two terribly ambiguous terms as your justification for decisions like this? The minorities are waiting for your answer.

Tamara Sack  
GEO member and English GTRA

## INDEX

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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 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at index@truman.edu or on our Web site at 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.

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