

# Board sets aside \$85K for campus site mapping

BY NICK MCKNIGHT  
for the Index

The Board of Governors approved an \$85,000 proposal Feb. 2 to map out the location of the campus' utilities network in preparation for future upgrades.

The project will be the first step in a long process to determine how to proceed with long-needed improvements to the electrical system, steam distribution, chilled water distribution, domestic water and fire water systems and gas distribution as well as voice data, fiber optic and TV cabling systems.

"We don't have one set of drawings right now that has all the utilities marked," Physical Plant Director Karl Schneider said. "If we want to find the locations on drawings, we've got to look in about six or seven different places to find them, so it will be a lot easier to deal with, especially if somebody has to dig underground."

The project will be undertaken by Benton & Associates, a group of consulting engineers and land surveyors based in Jacksonville, Ill., with an office in Kirksville. The group will compile information about location and past repairs, among other things, of campus utility systems.

The primary underground utility lines and pipes, including steam, water, electricity and sewer, will be mapped out so they can be easily located for future projects. Benton & Associates also will create an

electronic document to store information about the utilities that otherwise would be lost as long-time Physical Plant staff members retire.

Many Physical Plant employees have knowledge about the location of the utilities because of past projects, Schneider said.

"For the most part they didn't install the lines, but they remember them because they have worked on them before," he said. "When they work on them, we don't necessarily record what they've found because they are in the middle of doing work on them."

John Calise, vice president of Benton & Associates, said students will not be inconvenienced by Benton & Associates' work.

"We'll be pretty much doing our survey with handheld GPS units," Calise said. "[We'll] be out there with the handhelds just walking around campus like the students."

He said field work will not begin for a few months, and even then students might not notice the surveyors doing their work.

The project will take place in several steps, according to a letter to Campus Planner Mark Schultz from Benton & Associates. The first two steps will involve setting up timelines and expectations for the project, as well as researching Kirksville and University utility records, which will act as a starting point for the mapping.

Dave Rector, University director of

institutional research and budgets, said the work will not begin immediately.

"Much of the work is literally going through existing documents that are in a couple locations on campus and also working on locating the various lines: sewer, water, gas, electric, cable TV and everything that's buried," Rector said.

The third step will involve locating the visible utilities like fire hydrants and sewer openings, Calise said. He said all of this information will allow Benton & Associates to create the electronic map and data, which it will organize in the fourth step. The company will generate structure data spreadsheets and maps for review and store a copy of this information in case something damages the campus' utility infrastructure, he said.

"The engineering group and the Physical Plant should be able to review similar information electronically and hopefully keep each other updated on improvements and needs for work repairs as well as other ongoing efforts," Calise said.

Rector said now seemed like a good time to implement this information tool because the technology now is available.

"Also with all the construction we are doing on campus, with the residence halls and Pershing Building, it will give a better record when we are planning the construction and it can tie everything together," Rector said.

## Frozen fish



Jessie Gasch/Index

Milan, Mo., resident Dan van Ingen fishes in an Osteopathy Street pond coated with nearly five inches of solid ice. Van Ingen always hooks bluegill, bass and trout even without bait, but on Wednesday he tried wax worms. Trout are the only species fishers can keep.

# WACT soon might center on specific subjects

BY KATHLEEN MEYER  
for the Index

Truman's incoming students might have more options when registering for the required Writing as Critical Thinking classes starting next fall semester.

Students might have the option to choose a WACT course with a specific topic, as well as the option of taking the general WACT course. A few sections of the WACT courses could focus on such topics as pop culture, environmentalism, music, rural America and election issues, according to the document presented by Student Senate Academic Affairs.

Sophomore David Hayes, a member of Senate, formulated the idea for the new WACT classes.

"We hope to improve curriculum for first-year students," Hayes

said. "It can happen without changing the course objectives."

Hayes' proposed making WACT classes more interesting and introducing interdisciplinary learning at an early stage of the college experience. Hayes also wanted to get students excited about taking the course.

Sophomore Lizz Esfeld, Student Senate Academic Affairs chair, worked with Hayes. Esfeld said she wanted to make new students' first year at the University more beneficial.

"We were trying to come up with ways to tweak that course to make it a more fruitful experience for students," Esfeld said.

In the proposal by Academic Affairs, the new sections of WACT each would be centered on a chosen topic. Students still would complete the writing assignments and other requirements of the

WACT classes. Other than a narrower focus, the class itself would not change.

Priscilla Riggle, department chair of English and linguistics, said all present requirements of WACT would stay the same.

"It's the same course, the same course outcomes," she said. "That's really important."

Writing as Critical Thinking, or English 190, "requires students to read, think, and write carefully and critically, using instructor and peer response as well as self-assessment for revision," according to the 2007-08 General/Graduate Catalogue.

Students are required to take English 190 to complete their

Liberal Studies Program (LSP) requirements or take a writing-enhanced course in its place.

But many students think the WACT course as it is now is less than satisfactory.

In "Truman Tomorrow: Arete," Senate's document which contains suggestions for Truman's future, students responded to a survey on the curriculum.

"Students rated the Writing as Critical Thinking class as the least-

adequate class among all LSP and essential skills classes, with a rating of 2.78 on a scale from 1 (very inadequate) to 4 (very adequate)," according to the Graduating Student Questionnaire for 2005.

Freshman Maggie Faul took WACT her first semester and said she thinks the change will be exciting. Faul also said she likes the idea of specific topics.

"Then I could at least write about something I'm interested in," Faul said.

Adam Davis, professor of English and associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said he agrees with the proposed topic-based sections of WACT.

"I find it a very positive change," Davis said. "When you get a topical focus it allows the students to practice their writing in some depth."

Graduate student Sean Cooper is in his second semester of teaching at Truman. Cooper said he heard about the topic-based WACT classes and thought it would be an improvement to the program.

"I think it's great," Cooper said.

"It makes it a little more explicit."

Cooper said some students struggle with required courses like WACT and the change could be helpful.

"There's always going to be a certain resistance to courses you're required to take but that is a way to break through some of the resistance," Cooper said.

Cooper also thinks faculty will embrace the change.

"The focus gives them an opportunity to merge specific interests with a writing course," Cooper said.

In the plan by Student Senate, the topic-specific classes will be reserved exclusively for incoming students who could choose their course during summer registration. At the end of the course, data will be collected to determine whether the new topic-based sections were effective.

"Then I could at least write about something I'm interested in."

Maggie Faul  
Freshman

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