

ONE-ON-ONE

This week, two of our columnists debate each other. Their topic for this issue is:



Andrew Kindiger

Many students venture to Truman for value. They try to get the most bang for their buck by coming to a university of notable stature that offers an education at a reasonable price. It seems reasonable, then, to keep organizations like Student Senate in check in terms of how our money is being spent. If we're out for value, they had better make sure they're on top of things or they're not getting our money. However, making that argument across the board is dangerous when considering organizations like SAB or FAC. It might be hard for many of us to remember that we are not, in fact, at Harvard. Truman does not have the money to bring in big-name bands and world-class chefs to entertain its students. And I do not believe Hellogoodbye is going to play for the joy of being at a public institution striving for private quality. But what if I am infuriated by the actions of SAB and exceedingly disappointed with the activities selection? Should I demand my money back as if I'm at a restaurant and have received an overcooked meal? Shouldn't I be recompensated for dreams gone by? It's an option with Senate. If you feel so compelled, you can go through a somewhat simple application process to attain the cash equivalent of two loads of laundry (drying not included) for your grievances.

Neither group should refund

Senate offers this because it wants to be held accountable for its actions. It offers a check-and-balance system for students so they can rip their contributions away just in case senators start buying their books with the money or engaging in other financially irresponsible activities. And I guess if you have that much spite against Senate, go ahead and get your two bucks back — buy a couple of junior bacon cheeseburgers and really stick it to them. But why attack SAB and FAC, no matter how deep your hatred for music or good times goes? I guess some people could just outright hate comedians and want to cripple the abilities of these organizations, or maybe they like having fun but want to ruin the opportunity for others. Keep in mind when you want a check-and-balance system installed for SAB and FAC that they're not student government organizations. They are activities organizations. They don't want to change the way Truman operates day to day — they're just trying to give students something fun to do. The reality is, it's hard to find things to do in Kirksville. Not to knock the town, but people coming from larger communities are frequently disillusioned by the lack of recreational opportunities. We shouldn't be trying to get our money back from SAB or FAC unless we want even fewer options in terms of how

we spend our time. It's hard enough to get bands, comedians and other entertainers to come to Truman. We shouldn't make it harder on our friends at SAB and FAC by taking away their funding. After all, they're just trying to give us more options. And if it's not a good enough reason to be assured that your money is trying to be spent at your own benefit, think of what it can do for the University. It helps the reputation of our school to be able to bring in different types of entertainment for its students. It also will help the overall dynamic of our institution to be able to engage its students in life outside of academia. SAB and FAC are working as hard as they can. Even if they do not necessarily pick the bands that people are interested in, it helps to have entertainment come to try to spur more recognition that the University exists and is looking to host entertainers. Having entertainers come to the University helps get the word out, and might actually influence bands and comedians to come to our school. The bottom line is, if you don't like what's going on in SAB or FAC you should join the organizations and look to promote change. Taking their money away is just going to destroy their ability to do something for Truman students.

Andrew Kindiger is a freshman English major from Liberty, Mo.

Should FAC and SAB offer activities fee refunds?

vs.



Kelsey Landhuis

Both should refund if Senate must

Fair is fair, or so the saying goes. Unfortunately, when it comes to Student Senate's activities fee funding there is a definite lack of fairness. Currently, students can request a refund of their Student Governance Fee, the \$2-per-semester portion of the activities fee that funds Student Senate. Students simply complete an online form, listing the reason for the refund request along with any critiques or suggestions for improvement they would like to offer Senate. In theory, these refunds provide a means for holding Senate accountable and getting feedback from students. In practice, however, the refund policy is too often abused by students to be of any real use to Senate. The two other organizations that receive activities fee funding, the Student Activities Board and the Funds Allotment Council, are not required to offer refunds. Senate, SAB and FAC all serve the student body, but only Senate is forced to take a funding cut every semester. For equality's sake, the Organizational Activity Fee Review Committee should remove the Student Governance Fee refund option altogether. If refunds are offered, however, they should be available from Senate, SAB and FAC. The idea behind the refunds is that they provide a way for students to express their discontent with Senate's action and provide constructive criticism. However, according to Senate's

2007 Budget Review Committee Report, "We have seen [the refund system] turn into a fount of organized deception or, frankly, silliness." Students are not requesting refunds because they are dissatisfied with Senate — the Budget Review Committee Report also revealed that the majority of the student body does not know what Senate does. According to the report, when students responding to a survey conducted by the Budget Review Committee were provided a list of nine Senate projects and responsibilities, only two of the projects were recognized by more than 50 percent of the students as originating with Senate. The report conceded that the failure to recognize Senate's work was partly due to a lack of publicity, but it also reveals a lack of student involvement and the underlying problem with the refund system: How can you claim that an organization is not fulfilling its purpose if you don't even know what that purpose is supposed to be? If refunds are to be offered, however, they should be offered across the board. It has been argued that SAB and FAC should remain exempt from the refund requirement because the events they sponsor benefit all students, whether they attend them or not. Being able to boast about Demetri Martin or Dashboard Confessional coming to Truman as a result of SAB's efforts or

the numerous club sports that are made possible by FAC funding makes the University more appealing to prospective students. A bigger applicant pool makes the admission process more competitive, improving the University's reputation as a prestigious institute of higher education. Few would argue that SAB and FAC do not put their portion of the activities fee to good use, but so does Senate. The fact that its projects are less visible than SAB's and FAC's does not make them any less beneficial to the student body. The Bike Co-op, for example, provides a service for bikers and helps bridge the gap between the University and Kirksville at large. For students who are concerned about the environment, free recycling bins are available from Senate on request. The upcoming Safe Rides program is another way Senate is doing its part for the betterment of the University and the community. The fact that students are unaware of Senate's involvement in these programs does not make the programs any less worthwhile, or Senate any less deserving of its portion of the activities fee. The refund policy should apply to all recipients of activities fee funding, or better yet, to none of them.

Kelsey Landhuis is a junior English and French major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Giving up junk food, wild sex for Lent means missing the point of penitence



Brenna McDermott

This year for Lent I am giving up junk food. Hopefully that will bring me down a few sizes in my jeans. Also, I'm not going to buy any clothes for the next 40 days, so I can take that trip to Florida this summer with all the money I saved. Oh yeah, and did I mention this is all for Jesus, too? Lent is the most abused part of the Christian calendar year. According to the Vatican Web site (www.vatican.va), Lent is the 40-day period leading up to Easter. It was established to represent the 40 days that Jesus Christ spent in the desert being tempted by Satan. Lent originally was spent in deep prayer, fasting and almsgiving or helping the less fortunate. Lent is a time of penance, preparing Christians for Christ's resurrection from the cross and appreciating how he suffered and died to save humanity. Instead of doing penance, some go on Weight Watchers. Some conveniently use Lent as a time to do things they have been putting off all year. Some give up soda or candy, hoping they will be healthier by the

end of the 40 days, but is the focus really Christ's death and resurrection? Do they go to church more? Do they spend more time in prayer? Do they help those less fortunate? No. Some just give up things they shouldn't be doing anyway. Whether it is quitting smoking cigarettes or giving up all the wild sex they have, some people completely miss the point of Lent. Myself included. I am not the world's greatest Christian. I was one of those kids who was forced to put on a dress every Sunday for church and would not be excused from attending for anything less than a hospital stay. Church never was high on my list of priorities. But this year, I swear things are going to be different. I think we all struggle with keeping Lent a priority. No one wants to give up anything. Living in America, we are taught that we are entitled to everything in the world, and we should get whatever we want. And sometimes, that doesn't mix well with the Christian faith. On the Vatican Web site, Pope Benedict XVI wrote, "Each year, Lent offers us a providential opportunity to deepen the meaning and value of our Christian lives, and it stimulates us to rediscover the mercy of God so that we, in turn, become more merciful toward our brothers and sisters." I don't see how giving up Taco Bell will

help anyone rediscover the mercy of God. If you follow the Christian faith, you believe that Christ was tortured and died a slow and painful death on the cross. Lent is the time to honor that, and you make a resolution to exercise more? Will that help anyone "become more merciful toward our brothers and sisters"? The bottom line is that some people do not practice the penance of Lent for the right reasons. Some see it as an opportunity to look like a good Christian, or maybe some figure Lent is a time to kill two birds with one stone. My guess is that when Jesus was suffocating while hanging from two nails on a cross, he wasn't doing it to lose weight or to look like a really good person. There was no self-benefit in dying on his part. Luckily, for those who believe, it did do some good for us. And that is the whole point of Lent. Jesus didn't have any ulterior motives for dying on the cross. His intention was pure, and that is the example Christians should follow, especially during Lent. If you are at a loss for what to give up for Lent, ask yourself the most clichéd question in the world: What would Jesus do?

Brenna McDermott is a freshman undeclared major from St. Louis, Mo.

Providing incentives doesn't mean more effort expended in junior tests



Jackie Gonzalez

This month, I will be one of hundreds of juniors taking the Junior Assessment Test. Don't ask me what that means because unfortunately, I can't tell you. All I know is that if I choose not to take it, I can't graduate. So I asked a few JAT veterans for background information and, as expected, they all considered it a joke. Each thought it was unnecessary. Not one individual had positive things to say about the exam. As for the material we are to be assessed on, the exam seemingly is a broad assessment of general knowledge, which most certainly could have been acquired outside the classroom. Nevertheless, every year students are told to give it their all, and I'm sure a good majority don't. This year it's my turn, and, according to the Assessment Committee at Truman, it'll be different. Three main changes have been made in hopes to improve the testing process: more test dates, fewer testing materials and the intended-to-be-exciting prospect of "specific acknowledgment on [my] permanent transcript."

Although these test changes appear to be positive, the core of the issue has yet to be resolved: junior apathy. Personally, I think it is impossible to convince students to care about this test. As sad as it might sound, we are all so over-committed and focused on our own studies that we'd never sacrifice our time to take the exam seriously. As far as I can tell, the only incentive for me to do well on this exam is to receive that pseudo-gold star on my transcript. That and the notion of free pizza if I had signed up to take it by Tuesday. But I didn't. Don't get me wrong, I care about the goodwill of Truman. But you know what my parents have always told me? Put academics before anything else. Thus, I'm going to finish that test as fast as I can to grant me more study time to ace the test I have the day after. I think it's fair for me to say that most people really don't care about this. And if you're not applying to graduate schools, why would you? There are absolutely no benefits to doing well on this exam if you aren't interested in going beyond the undergraduate degree. Even if you're grad school-bound, the benefits of doing well are pretty insignificant. If there isn't a "mark of distinction" on my transcript, how will graduate schools know that there potentially could have been?

The letter adds that a benefit of doing well is that my results can be used by faculty for letters of recommendation and employment. Personally, I would much rather my recommenders look at the work I've done the past three years at Truman than a multiple choice test. I'm sure even high school teachers don't refer to a student's SAT scores to show them the student's strengths and work ethic. The only method of getting the scores the administration wants is making the test affect the most important thing to most students: their grades. A friend informed me that her senior exam is part of her senior seminar grade. That kind of threat would definitely be encouraging, to say the least. From my standpoint, the only reason this test was installed to begin with is that it was required by the state. So because I see it as just another requirement, I'm sure some campus officials do too. If the administration can spend thousands for a consultant to inform us that "the bar is higher" for attracting prospective students here due to our location, then clearly we can afford another one to solve this dilemma.

Jackie Gonzalez is a junior communication and history major from San Diego, Calif.

AROUND THE QUAD

How were you affected by the recent flu outbreak?

Alexandria Smith
Junior

"I skipped — missed — three classes and was sick for a week. But it's almost over, and my housemates quarantined me to my room."

Scott Turner
Freshman

"I've been a little sick but I think it's more allergies than influenza."

Jayne Fields
Senior

"I had it mildly last week, mostly lethargy, and I've been washing my hands a lot. I also got the flu shot."

Nicole Moore
Senior

"I definitely had it. I got it at a convention, and I had a 102-degree fever, but I'm over it now."

WEB POLL

Do you drink Kirksville water straight from the tap?

No.
(38% — 25 votes)

Yes.
(62% — 41 votes)

This week's question:
Did your favorite candidate win in the primary or caucus of your state?

Vote online at www.trumanindex.com