Professors react to rating system reform

New bill requires schools to post information online

BY MARIAH BOHANON
Staff Reporter

University faculty members have spoken up in response to the Missouri Department for Higher Education's interpretation of Senate Bill 389, which it announced on Friday.

The bill, which passed earlier this year, contains a resolution requiring all public four-year colleges in Missouri to offer public access to instructor ratings online.

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He said many faculty members think posting ratings online could prompt misuse and misunderstanding of the ratings. Giving the public access to this information could lead to "lawsuits, misuse of the data, grade inflation, and other unintended consequences," according to a resolution Faculty Senate sent to MDHE.

The resolution was written in response to MDHE's request for feedback from colleges concerning how Bill 389 should be interpreted and enforced.

"I'm pleased, at least, that this process is evolving and that the DHE sought input from institutions across the state," Guffey said.

He said it is unclear at this time whether the information posted online would come directly from the course evaluations filled out by students. Guffey said there is much work to be done concerning how the ratings will be handled within the University.

"If we were building a house, we would still be drawing up the blueprints," he said.

The University has until fall 2008 to implement a new system for instructor ratings, Guffey said.

Kathryn Brammall, University representative to the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates, said MDHE announced that it had revised regulations for Bill 389 based on the responses of faculty members from colleges across the state. The new guidelines are in compliance with several key factors included in Faculty Senate's resolution. MDHE announced that the definition of the word "feasible" in the bill will be changed, that each institution will develop its own method of rating instructors and that an institution can grant access to instructor ratings to enrolled students only, as opposed to the general public.

"There was a lot of discussion at Faculty Senate about the underlying principle of posting this information online," Brammall said.

Truman was the first school in the state to send an approved written resolution to MDHE's request for feedback to Bill 389, she said.

"Students need to be a very big part of this," she said, referring to the need for the University to formulate a method for instructor ratings in accordance with Bill 389 and MDHE's guidelines.

The entire University community, including both faculty and students, should be involved in creating new evaluation questions for the information that will be posted online, Brammall said. This information will be for the benefit of the students, she said.

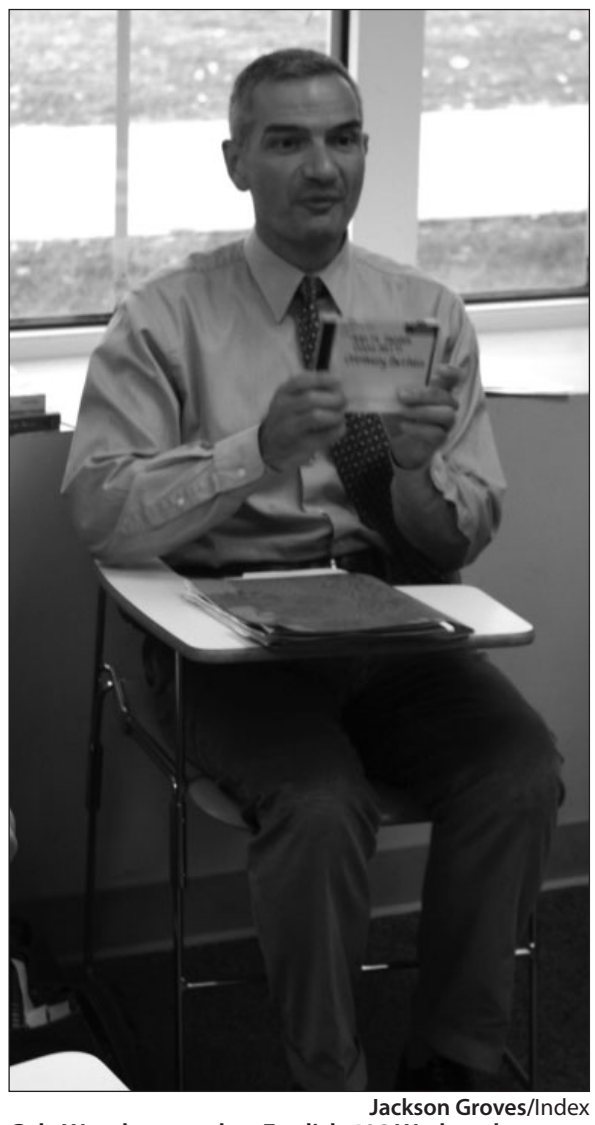
Senior Matt Szewczyk, Student Senate president, said the Student Senate collected information showing that the majority of students are dissatisfied with the current rating system. A survey in 2005 showed that students thought course evaluations were inconsequential, he said.

The Student Senate agrees with the Faculty Senate on three main points concerning the use of a new ratings system, Szewczyk said. Those three main objectives are that instructor ratings be kept within the University community, that any evaluations which concern promoting an instructor be classified as a personnel matter and that enrolled students have access to instructor ratings online.

Szewczyk said one improvement to the current course evaluations could be to standardize evaluations. He said there is evidence that having standard forms provides more accurate and beneficial information for instructor ratings, he said.

It is necessary for students to give input in creating a new method for instructor ratings, Szewczyk said.

"I encourage students to get in touch with myself or other members of Student Senate about their concerns," he said.



Jackson Groves/Index
Cole Woodcox teaches English 498 Wednesday afternoon. Woodcox is one of the most highly rated professors at Truman on ratemyprofessors.com.

Forums invite candidate interviews

University searches for vice president of enrollment management

BY BONNIE BIRDSELL
Staff Reporter

Truman is hosting more open forums.

The University currently is in the market for a new associate vice president for enrollment management. A search committee comprised of faculty and staff members across campus has whittled the field of applicants down to three candidates, according to the committee's Web site. The finalists are Larry Dale Hoezee, Stuart Tennant and Regina Morin.

"This is a cabinet-level position," said Pam Gardner, assistant professor of nursing and a member of the search committee.

Gardner said the associate vice president reports directly to the University president and supervises the Office of Admission and the Financial Aid office. Other tasks of the post are to attract and retain a highly selective, academically talented and diverse student body, according to the official description of the position. The vice president of enrollment management also would work to refine the University's retention efforts and to expand its comprehensive enrollment plan.

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>
> **Haley Ray**
> Sophomore

Hoezee was on campus Oct. 4 to answer questions from faculty, staff and students.

"I was there for the [entire] faculty-staff open forum and half of the student open forum," Gardner said. "What he brought up the most was what they call the discount rate. … It has to do with the amount of scholarships kids are given, so it's the amount of money they are given that discounts the tuition."

Gardner said Hoezee fielded many questions about interpersonal relationships within the Office of Admission as well as questions about on-campus diversity.

"He came with a lot of experience and data," Gardner said.

Originally, Dennis Trotter was a finalist for the position and was scheduled to have forums Oct. 15.

"He e-mailed the chairman of the committee and said he was withdrawing from consideration," Gardner said. She also said she could not discuss the reasons.

Candidate Regina Morin replaced Trotter on the forum schedule for Oct. 15. Morin said one of the biggest appeals of the job is that she already has strong connections to the University and to Kirksville. Morin said she received both undergraduate and master's degrees from Truman and worked as the associate director of admission for 13 years when the institution still was known as Northeast Missouri State University.

"Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog," she said.

Morin said she originally is from Edina, about 30 miles from Kirksville, and that her parents and brothers still reside in the area.

Morin said her years working at private institutions like Simpson College in Iowa and Columbia College in Missouri can help her bring the feel of a private school to Truman, which she said was an original goal of the University's mission change.

"I have the history," she said. "I was [at Truman] for the mission change."

Morin also said she would be interested in getting the entire University involved in retaining students and drawing in a more diverse student body.

"No one person can recruit students," she said. "It has to be a campus-wide, systemic process."

Morin said that what makes her unique overall is her pre-existing understanding of the University, which comes from her years of experience both as a student and staff member.

"Truman has very talented students," she said. "I think you have to understand the passion of being a Bulldog."

Sophomore Haley Ray said she thinks it is important for students to attend open forums.

"They get to hear from the candidates themselves what their purpose is," she said. "Also, they are allowed to ask the candidates their own questions about the position, about what the candidate would do in that position … and what they can bring to the school."

Ray said she thinks the forums are a vital opportunity for students to make their opinions known to the administration.

"Oftentimes, the candidate that the administration likes best might not be the candidate the students feel they would be best served by," she said.

Gardner also said she would like to see students getting involved in the process of choosing candidates.

"Students need to attend these open sessions," she said. "[The people in these positions] control purse strings, they control requirement, they control a lot of the environment."

She said that by attending the forums and asking questions, students would be helping University President Barbara Dixon make the decision.

"If she doesn't get a lot of feedback, then she's pretty much shooting in the dark because she only has her impression," Gardner said. "She'd really like to have as much input as she can get."

The forum for Stuart Tennant will be Oct. 11, and the forum for Regina Morin will be Oct. 15. The faculty and staff forum will be from 4 to 5 p.m. and the student forum will be from 5 to 6 p.m. on both dates. Forums will be in Violette Hall 1000 and forms for feedback on the candidates will be available for all faculty, staff and students who attend.

NEWS | In Brief

Physical Plant to repair sidewalk

A section of sidewalk damaged in a water main break outside the McKinney Center probably will be repaired this week, said Karl Schneider, University physical plant director. The repairs are contingent upon the weather, he said.

Schneider said that although the sidewalk cracked more than two weeks ago, other projects on campus have preempted mending it.

The original cause of the water main break is unknown, and it has already been fixed, Schneider said. He added that the sidewalk was the extent of the external damage from the break.

Education Dept. ends paper FAFSA

The U.S. Education Department has announced it will no longer mail out copies of the FAFSA, beginning in January, according to an article from the Sept. 28 issue of the Chronicle for Higher Education.

The department decided on the change after observing that more than 94 percent of applicants already use the form's online version and noting that sending out hard copies is wasteful, according to the article. The online version is easier for families to fill out and saves money, said Terry Hartle, senior vice president for government and public affairs at the American Council on Education, in the article.

According to the article, paper forms still will be available in bulk order for schools whose students need or prefer that version. Individual students also may call a toll-free phone number to request a hard copy by mail.

Fire alarms increase in Missouri Hall

Missouri Hall has experienced more fire alarms than usual this year, said John Mounsey, coordinator for facilities and process design for Residence Life.

Mounsey said the number of fire alarms is up because the new smoke detectors in the recently renovated rooms are wired together. Each time a resident burns something, such as popcorn, in his or her room, it sets off the entire building, he said.

Mounsey said residence hall staff are limited in what they can do besides educate students about the sensitive detector system. He added that the smoke detectors similar to the system in Missouri Hall will be installed in the residence halls as each of them are renovated.

Patrol arrests man for growing pot

Missouri State Highway Patrol officers arrested Kirksville resident Paul Johnson on charges of distributing, delivering or manufacturing a controlled substance after finding marijuana plants growing outside his home Sunday, according to corporal Nicholas Berry's probable cause statement.

The officers noticed 12 to 14 well-tended marijuana plants growing in pots while they were installing surveillance equipment around the site, according to the statement. The officers caught Johnson as he approached the plants carrying a bucket, also according to the statement.

Quincy, Ill., offers free concerts

Members of the University community may now attend concert events in Quincy, Ill., for free by presenting their Truman ID at the ticket desk of the Morrison Theater in Quincy Junior High School, according to a press release from Monday.

The Quincy Symphony Orchestra is celebrating its 60th anniversary season this year, and its first performance this season, "Generations," will be at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 13 at Morrison Theater.

"Generations" will feature cellist Harriet Yount and her daughters Marcia Yount and Letitia Yount Bryant as well as violinist Brian Gehrich. They will perform classical composer Joseph Haydn's "Sinfonia Concertante for violin, cello, oboe, bassoon and orchestra."

Individuals interested in more information or who would like to reserve tickets may call 217-222-2856.

Student Senate | In Brief

- Senate passed a resolution for the need of a cooperative bike workshop.
- Senate discussed the ability of student organizations to request space on campus.
- Senate passed a resolution for space allocation on campus for student organizations.

DPS | Reports

10/8	Report of property damage outside Kirk Building
10/3	Report of a burglary in Dobson Hall
10/3	Report of property damage in Ophelia Parrish
10/2	Report of theft from Student Union Building
10/2	Report of a burglary from Red Barn Park
10/2	Report of theft from Student Union Building

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