

Panel will address academic freedom

BY JULIE WILLIAMS
News Editor

Professors and administrators soon will begin an extensive evaluation process.

Faculty Senate is creating a committee that will explore the policies and procedures in place to protect intellectual diversity at Truman. Adam Davis, associate dean of the college of arts and sciences, has been selected to chair the committee.

The passage of House Bill 213, which was proposed last spring, would require every public higher education institution in the state to promote academic freedom, make the policies and procedures associated with academic freedom known to students and notify the Coordinating Board for Higher Education of its progress annually, according to the bill. That bill was passed in the Missouri House of Representatives but died in the Missouri Senate committee, meaning it did not reach the floor. Even without successful passage of the bill, Truman is evaluating intellectual diversity on campus.

Should a bill similar to HB 213 pass in the future, Davis said the creation of the committee will allow Truman to be prepared for compliance.

Davis said one of the committee's goals is to achieve representation from the campus through its members but said he cannot give a concrete list of members at this point. He said Faculty Senate asked the committee to present its findings by the end of the semester and that he expects the first committee meeting to occur next week.

The committee's two tasks will be to study methods of protection for intellectual diversity at Truman and to make recommendations. Davis said the committee will look at campus documents such as the student and faculty handbooks and the Board of Governors code of policies.

"We're going to determine whether we have adequate mechanisms in place for the student or faculty member

who feels that there has been inappropriate ideological discrimination and to make sure that there are grievance procedures for these people," Davis said. "If we find that there is a deficit of mechanisms or a deficit of publicity about available mechanisms, then the second part of our task is to make recommendations to Faculty Senate about how we address those deficits."

Davis said he is unaware of any current ideological-based discrimination at Truman or reports of such discrimination.

"Academic freedom is at the heart of what you always assumed an education was. It's the absolutely fundamental basis of education."

David Robinsons
Professor of History

"However, that doesn't tell us much. If our problem is that there are no reporting channels, the lack of reports isn't evidence that we're in good shape," he said.

David Robinson, professor of history, said academic freedom, another term for intellectual diversity, can be described as the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn.

"Academic freedom is at the heart of what you always assumed an education was," Robinson said. "It's the absolutely fundamental basis of education."

Robinson said academic freedom is a multi-level system that informs universities about what kinds of curriculum should be taught, where ideas should come from and what might be important in the future. He said he thinks passing a law such as HB 213 that has a checklist for accomplishing academic freedom would only do harm to universities.

"We're concerned that a version of this bill will come up again this year," Robinson said.

As the vice-president of the statewide branch of the American Association of University Professors — an organization that defends academic freedom and shared governments — Robinson gave testimony at hearings for HB 213 before the Senate committee on higher education in early May, asking for rejection of the bill.

Rep. Rebecca McClanahan, D-Kirksville, said she also is concerned about such a bill and that she thinks it would be unnecessary and a waste of

university professors' and administrators' time.

The bill came about after a student at Missouri State University refused to complete an assignment that asked her to advocate adoptions by gay couples, according to the March 29 issue of the Index. The student reached a settlement with MSU after the incident, according to the article.

"It's an incredible overreaction to a non-existent problem," McClanahan said.

McClanahan said she thinks one role of a university is to seek truth, and one way to do that is to explore all avenues of a subject.

She said she thinks the pursuit of a bill like HB 213 would have tragic results for future students at Missouri public institutions.

"I'm really kind of worried that this kind of regulation from the state level will have a chilling effect on professors' ability and inclination to use a wide variety of strategies and explore a wide variety of thinking," McClanahan said.

In anticipation of the bill going another round in the state legislature, Robinson said many universities, including Truman, are reminding people that academic freedom already is in place.

"On this issue ... my feeling is that we're doing a good job on all levels or we'd be getting more complaints coming from a professor who says, 'They won't let me teach this, or 'I was disciplined because I think that,'" Robinson said. "The real issues of academic freedom where people's general pursuit of academic freedom in any area has been stifled by order — that's students or teachers — I just can't think of a case here."

Freshman Amy Caldwell said she has had a good experience so far at Truman, and that most of her teachers care about her learning. She said if she interprets an assignment differently than a teacher does, she usually is allowed to take her own path if she talks with that teacher.

Caldwell also said she thinks academic freedom is not something that can be state-mandated.

"As soon as something becomes law, then it's forced upon people [and] it's not really freedom anymore," she said.



Cashier Sarah Sholas hands a customer change Wednesday at the Shell station on Baltimore. Minimum wage will increase in Missouri by 15 cents next January. Jason Williams/Index

Wage increase planned

Second of three-part increase to take effect in January 2008

BY SARAH SMITH
Staff Reporter

One dime and one nickel will change payroll.

Missouri's minimum wage will increase by 15 cents Jan. 1, 2008, to \$6.65, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Web site. The reason for the increase comes from a 2.2 percent change in the consumer price index between July 2006 and July 2007.

The CPI represents the change in prices for a sample of services and goods that consumers buy. The CPI is the most widely used device for inflation measurement and takes into account the pricing of about 80,000 items monthly ranging from apparel and food to housing and transportation.

The increase will affect businesses paying employees minimum wage, such as Kirksville's Hy-Vee.

"It's going to have very little effect ... compared to the last increase we had," store director Jon Broce said.

Broce said the store employs about 140 to 150 part-time workers, about 20 of whom are Truman students, and that Hy-Vee spends a total of about \$3 million each year on payroll. However, the 15-cent increase will have little effect and not make much of a difference in profits, he said.

Last year's minimum wage increase, from \$5.15 to \$6.50, upped payroll by \$1,500 a week, which was not covered in the store's budget.

This increase in wages already will be figured into the store's budget. Broce said they review all employees and give an annual raise and that employees working at the current minimum wage would receive that pay increase anyway with their annual raise.

"[Minimum wage] is a fair system," Broce said. "They build in cost-of-living expenses."

Clint Brown has worked in the produce section at Hy-Vee for about four and a half years and works about 36 hours a week. Brown receives \$6.60 an hour.

"I'm satisfied," Brown said about his pay.

Sophomore Jordan Gribble, who is originally from Kansas, will not be affected by the increase but said she still supports it.

"People naturally have to make more money to be able to pay for the things that [have] increased," Gribble said.

She said she is sympathetic toward small businesses because she knows it's hard for them to pay employees more by the hour.

"I think people need more money, but we can't put small businesses out of business at the same time," Gribble said.

Professor of economics Seymour Patterson said he sees minimum wage as putting a floor on how much an employer can pay an employee. As the wage

increases, more people will want to find jobs, but businesses still will only hire a certain number of people. This puts a gap between supply and demand, Patterson said.

"I believe in the absence of a minimum wage, there would be a lot of people ... who would fall under the poverty line and/or be unable to earn enough income to support their families," Patterson said.

He also said in regards to the past federal increase of July 24, 2007, that federal minimum wage does not take into account inflation like many state minimum wages do.

"I tend to think people who lack skills and earn low pay ... if they are productive, they deserve an increase," Patterson said.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Web site, President Bush signed a spending bill May 25 which increased the federal minimum wage in three separate steps. The first increase raised minimum wage to \$5.85. Next, the bill will increase the minimum wage to \$6.55 and then finally to \$7.25, which will be in effect July 24, 2009. Starting Jan. 1, 2009, and every year afterward on that date, the minimum wage will increase or decrease depending on the living factor or CPI.

In Missouri, the minimum wage exceeds the federal wages even though some states such as Alabama and Louisiana do not have a minimum wage law at all.

Counties extend livestock farming regulations

BY DIANE POELKER
Assistant News Editor

Local livestock farmers are facing new regulations which might create controversy within communities.

The Knox County Board of Commissioners passed a new ordinance regulating concentrated animal feeding operations Oct. 1. Pete Mayfield, the presiding commissioner of Knox County, said the ordinance incorporates smaller Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations under the county's pre-existing CAFO laws.

"Farmers would put two Class IV [CAFOs] side by side to avoid regulation," Mayfield said. "[Smaller CAFOs] just started in the last couple of years. Time will tell if it affects the water supply."

The original Knox County CAFO ordinance defined a CAFO as land where more than 999 animal units are confined and fed, as opposed to free-range animals that graze the land. CAFOs are defined as class I, II or III depending on the number of animal units living together. Mayfield said the new ordinance defines a new class of CAFOs, class IV, which houses 300 to 500 animal units.

"We've already got a health ordinance in place," Mayfield said. "We thought [additional regulations] would help the smaller farmers."

Tim Gibbons, communication director for the Missouri Rural Crisis Center in Columbia, Mo., said CAFOs typically appear in rural communities because of corporate involvement. Corporations sign contracts with in-

dividual farmers to set up CAFOs on their land. CAFOs often allow farmers to remain economically competitive by increasing animal production.

"It's the Wal-Mart effect of agriculture," Gibbons said. "It's hard to be a viable hog farmer today. Corporations have taken over. They have the majority of the animals and can control the market. It's hard for rural producers to compete with that."

Gibbons said counties enact health ordinances to prevent CAFOs from drastically changing their communities. CAFOs produce large amounts of manure that have the potential to contaminate community water supplies, as well as to create air pollution, according to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Web site

"[People] have an image of how

they want their communities to look," Gibbons said. "They don't want their communities to drastically change because 7,000 hogs are moving in next door. Property value drops when corporate CAFOs move in."

Michael Seipel, associate professor of agriculture, said county CAFO regulations can create controversy. Last May, the Missouri state legislature failed to pass Senate Bill 364, regulating CAFOs statewide. According to environmentalcommons.org, independent farmers strongly opposed the bill, citing the need for local control in agricultural communities. Seipel said Missouri permits CAFOs, but that regulations come from county governments. Controversy can arise between farmers who support CAFOs as a means for economic gain and other members of

the community who see CAFO waste as a nuisance.

"Right to farm laws were generated to protect farmers," Seipel said. "They also have had the effect of limiting regulation."

Seipel said CAFO ordinances are relatively recent legislation. Local regulation began in the 90s in response to CAFOs set up by Premium Standard Farms, a livestock producer with facilities in Mercer, Putnam, Sullivan, Daviess and Gentry counties in Missouri. Currently 16 Missouri counties, including Adair County, have passed CAFO health ordinances.

"Different types of farmers are on different sides of the issue," Seipel said. "For a livestock producer attempting to make an income to support a household, many see [CAFOs] as a valid economic opportunity."

Leisure World
Family Entertainment and Recreation Center

Tuesday Night At Leisure World
Student Night

- Free Rental
- Bowling \$2.75 per game
- Pool \$5 per hour

Lounge and Deli specials all night

Come out and spend Tuesday night with us!

2310 E. Illinois
660 - 665 - 7764

Hidden Treasures
retail store

Ask us about retail therapy!!

Find us on the northeast corner of the square
660-665-0011