

Radical opinions deserve public forum for expression



Chris Waller

"I disapprove of what you say ..."

While walking to campus last Friday the furthest thing from my mind was my religious viewpoint. I was concentrated on making it to class on-time and then turning loose and enjoying the weekend. Lots of things were floating through my head, but God definitely wasn't one of them.

As I approached the Quad, however, I unexpectedly ran into a large crowd near Baldwin Hall. Being the curious person that I am, I decided to take a look at what was getting everyone's attention. There, the Holy Father himself was thrust into the forefront of my thoughts.

I was almost immediately offended.

In the middle of a mob of students was preacher Jed Smock, preaching about how virtually everyone who could hear his voice was going to burn in eternal hellfire. This included anyone who drank, smoked, did anything more than talk to the opposite sex (or the same sex, depending on your persuasion) or even used a cell phone.

Not only was I a bit upset considering I fit into nearly every category of "sinner" that the good reverend called out as having a one-way ticket to meet Lucifer, but also I felt that this was a gross misrepresentation of the Christian faith.

I was equally offended by the reaction of the crowd. Students were shout-

Even though it might have been a bit distracting, I can't wait for the group to return to campus.

ing, swearing and mocking the speakers, and at some points deliberately doing things they knew would get a reaction. A few same-sex students even kissed when Smock started talking about the horrible sin of homosexuality — a blatant tactic designed to offend.

Despite my disapproval of both sides of the fight, I just kept walking, keeping my discontent to myself. I was late for statistics, after all.

"... but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

Even though I thought everyone involved in the incident was taking some pretty extreme views, I believe that everyone had the right to say and do what they did. These people, both the preachers and the students who reacted to them, were simply expressing their rights as American citizens. And what better place to do this than at a government-funded institution whose purpose is to enlighten and expand the minds of the public?

People like Smock should be allowed to speak on campus, and students should be allowed to respond in any way they see fit — except with the use of violence. Whoever says what happened last week was getting in the way of our education was wrong. What happened last week is an integral part of our education, which expands beyond the library and the classroom. Our education is more than just what we learn from teachers and books. At some point we must learn the real-world implications of our studies. We

must know that every question doesn't necessarily have one specific answer and that people will debate veraciously about certain issues such as — as many of us saw firsthand — religion.

If we didn't allow for such dialogues to happen and if we didn't let our citizens speak their minds, we would be no better than a totalitarian state. Would you want to live in a country where your opinions are spoon-fed to you and all of the decisions about religion, race, ethics and science are made by whoever happens to be in power? I don't think anyone does. That is why it is important to let peaceable demonstrations continue, especially on publicly funded campuses like ours. No one was injured, nothing was destroyed, and even though many left complaining, at least a few minds might have been changed because of this impromptu religious debate.

Even though it might have been a bit distracting, I can't wait for the group to return to campus. If you see another crowd gathering next month, do yourself a favor and stop to listen at our own version of Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner. If you feel the need to say or do something, do it and feel blessed that you live in a society where you can. If you don't feel the need to say anything, be courteous to those who do because you would want the same respect if you were trying to speak on a topic about which you cared passionately.

If we do not allow each other to speak our minds now, we might one day live in a society where nobody has a mind of their own to speak at all.

Chris Waller is a senior communication and English major from St. Joseph, Mo.

Early athlete registration would yield wide disparity



Alex Hayden

Athletes are gods.

They reign high above us on a mountaintop as a shining example of all that is superior in this world.

At least, that's what most individuals would like to have us believe. Although athletes can act as role models for many, they fall far from godliness. Unfortunately, Student Senate is discussing whether to place our own athletes on a pedestal above the rest of the student body.

It has been suggested to senate that student athletes be allowed to register for classes before any other students to reduce conflicts when scheduling practices and games. Senate decided to ask around about the topic, and you might have been one of the lucky few who got to voice your opinion.

Well, here is mine.

This privileged registration should never happen and, for that matter, never even should have been considered. I have to ask why students working both at a job and at school would not also

Are academics not held at the same level as athletics at Truman State University?

be given preference so that they might also reduce scheduling conflicts.

It might seem absurd at first, but both athletes and working students are participating in activities that they choose to do. If you choose to participate in a sport while going to Truman, you are subject to the same scheduling conflicts as any other student. If athletes are given preference for scheduling, so should students who work while at school.

We should allow students who represent the University in any capacity to have early registration as well. Students who participate in Truman's ultimate and rugby teams should get to sign up early for classes along with any other club teams because they need to schedule practices and attend games.

So, too, should non-athletic teams like Truman's mock trial and debate teams be allowed early scheduling to reduce class conflict with travel schedules and practices. It is also important to think about those individuals who work their way up the ladder to sign

up for those classes that everyone wishes to take. Think of those students who get additional credits in the summer so they can sign up for class earlier.

Are we to say that their academic work and achievements should be overwritten just because someone else is an athlete?

Are academics not held at the same level as athletics at Truman State University?

If such a resolution were passed, it would send an outrageous message to the student body. Simply put, athletes would have unfounded privileges not allowed to other students.

I hope you will agree with me when I say that the student body must reject such a proposal. It would be beneficial to both the everyday student and the athlete if it were rejected. It is inappropriate to send the ongoing message to athletes that if you are good enough at a sport, you will be granted exemptions and privilege in life. A university is supposed to encourage and foster the growth of both body and mind, not body over mind. Academics and athletics must be held at the same level and to the same accountability. No one should have privilege over the other.

Alex Hayden is a senior communication and philosophy and religion major from Jefferson City, Mo.

Homecoming policies do not inspire student interest



Jackie Gonzalez

It's that time of the year again. The time when there seems to be an excessive amount of Greek apparel, cheesy-themed clothing and events I've never been enthusiastic about.

It's Homecoming.

Every year this event comes and goes, leaving no real resonance. I know Truman is different from most universities, but Homecoming is seriously lacking. I'll admit it — I've never attended anything related to Homecoming. This year will be my first, but only out of obligation. It's hard for me to fathom that people spend hours upon hours willingly throwing this whole thing together when I never hear anything about it except for the unofficial after-parties.

I also know you don't have to be Greek to participate in Homecoming events. I get it. But the actions of the participants are telling me otherwise.

To me, this is what they really mean: "Look, everyone is going to be Greek there, but I mean, you can come, but only because we're kind of forced to say this."

The Homecoming Committee consistently has claimed interest in reaching out to a broader audience, but I have yet to be convinced that any of it is worth my time.

This year the committee decided to make some additional changes to the Homecoming process. According to an article in the Sept. 13 issue of the Index, new rules were set in place to prohibit excessive campaign spending. It was a decision to create an "even financial playing field," as the article called it.

Unfortunately, by removing all of the individual organizations' posters, we now will be forced to see the same two posters over and over again, with minimal substance.

Sure it's environmentally friendly, but it's not practical — if you want students who aren't involved to care, then don't give us even less information and less personalization about our court.

I enjoyed seeing the posters of each Homecoming candidate. Not only is it a source of pride for candidates, but also I am sure the organizations that

sponsored them were proud of being a part of the honor that is the Homecoming Court.

Unfortunately, it appears that the committee failed to look at the whole picture. Removing publicity only makes others more discouraged about participating in Homecoming events.

I'm practically certain that this policy will make even more people feel out of the loop this year, both for activities in general and for the voting for the court.

But I'm also eager to see how the campaigning this year will present itself. With no posters, it seems as if nominees will have to seek out new and possibly more expensive methods of publicity. Ideally, I'd like to see some guerilla marketing for these candidates — that'd be the surefire way to get a vote from me.

Nevertheless, as long as I don't get personally hounded by every candidate, this October should be just like every other. But heed this advice — don't go overboard. I couldn't handle another AFTERdark-esque campaign on campus.

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

Around the Quad

This week's question:
"Should Columbus continue to have a national holiday in his honor?"



"I think no, because it's disrespectful of the individuals and families who were harmed by Columbus."

Jenny Tullmann, Senior



"It was an important event, but there are a lot of other important events that we don't have a holiday for — the politically correct thing would be no."

Robert Graber, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology



"No, because there's speculation he wasn't the first European here, he's not a hero in many countries, and we don't celebrate it much so it's pointless."

Grace Curtright, Freshman



"Yes, as long as we honor what he stood for and not what he did as a person."

Natalie Schmith, Senior

Senate should draft resolution against Columbus



Daniel Glossenger

Where I come from — the Volunteer State, home of good ol' Rocky Top and three U.S. presidents — we've got a wondrous little holiday every July 13.

It's the duty of the governor to proclaim that day as one of "special observance," and Tennesseans everywhere are invited to observe the day in schools, churches and other suitable places, according to the law of the land. In the letter of the law, it's nestled right between Memorial Day and Veterans Day — it's just that important.

What happens July 13 in Tennessee? Nathan Bedford Forrest Day. You might know him from such feature films as "Forrest Gump," in which he briefly is portrayed by Tom Hanks as a hooded Ku Klux Klan leader and ancestor of Gump.

When informed of the Klan's creation, former Confederate Gen. Forrest said, "That's a good thing. That's a damn good thing. We can use that to keep the [blacks] in their place."

If you can't tell, Forrest really was a heckuva guy — and it's easy to see that we probably should drop the "Nathan Bedford Forrest Day" gig in Tennessee, regardless of his heroic status there.

But why stop there? Why do we keep Columbus Day on the books? He really gives the American South a run for its money if you're looking at atrocities.

For example, on his first try out from Europe in 1492, Columbus kidnapped between 10 and 25 people to bring on his return to Spain. About seven or eight arrived alive. That's not so bad, at least in the grand scheme of things.

On his second trip back to Haiti in 1493, Columbus demanded food, gold, spun cotton and sex with Arawak women. If the Arawaks committed even a minor offense, Columbus ordered that the offender's ears or nose be cut off,

according to James Loewen, winner of the 1996 American Book Award. The Arawaks were forced into labor at the hands of Columbus.

When the Arawaks resisted, Columbus attacked. According to Kirkpatrick Sale in "The Conquest of Paradise," there were nearly 3,000,000 Arawaks in 1496 — Columbus' own brother estimated there to be more than a million at the time, not counting children and those who had escaped into the mountains. By 1516, only 20 years later, there were 12,000. By 1542, there were a few hundred, and by 1555, they were gone.

For Columbus, the Arawaks were a people to be subjugated and, if necessary, exterminated. Although many indigenous people of the Americas died from disease, Columbus' policies often were an intentional effort to maim, torture and kill. At Columbus' feet we can squarely lay the blame for policies and actions that resulted in one of the worst genocides in human history.

The United States is one of the few countries to honor Christopher Columbus, and we've been doing it nationally since the 1890s and officially since 1937. He's only one of three individuals honored with a national holiday here — the others being Martin Luther King Jr. and George Washington. A civil rights advocate, the first president and a human rights violator all are immortalized together — it's time for the U.S. to make up its ideological mind.

Although we can't force the U.S. Congress to remove Columbus Day from the list of national holidays, we can do something. Student Senate should draft a resolution to be submitted to the Missouri General Assembly to protest the celebration of Columbus Day in this state. Several other states already have replaced it with Indigenous People's Day, Native American Day or even Discoverer's Day, but the Show-Me State should show others the way — we should abolish Columbus Day entirely and wipe him from the map.

Daniel Glossenger is a senior history major from Nashville, Tenn.

October 11 Results
as of 9 p.m. Tuesday

INDEX Web poll

Are you excited that Demetri Martin will perform at Truman?

Response	Percentage	Number of Votes
Of course!	58%	29
Demetri who?	30%	15
Eh, I'd have rather had Bob Seger, but Demetri is OK in the end.	12%	6

This week's question:
Should athletes be allowed to register early for classes?

Vote online at
www.trumanindex.com