

Two students compete for Board position

BY SHELBY HIGGINBOTHAM
Staff Reporter

Two candidates have emerged from a field of thousands of potential applicants for the Board of Governors student representative position.

Every two years, a committee meets to choose one student as the representative to the board. The current representative is senior Emily Kiddoo.

"I wanted to get involved in Truman, and I thought that this would be a unique way to do it," Kiddoo said.

In 2005, Kiddoo was one of six to apply for the position. The field was then narrowed to three students, who were sent to meet with Governor Matt Blunt and members of his board. Kiddoo said that during the meeting, she met with students from other Missouri colleges.

Before her appointment to the student representative position, Kiddoo had to be approved by a special committee composed of people involved in campus organizations. Some organizations represented on the committee include the Residence Hall Association, student media, Student Senate and the Student Activities Board.

Matt Szweczyk, Student Senate president, said only three students went through the application process this year.

"One of the things we really

looked for in the candidates was what kind of personality they had," Szweczyk said.

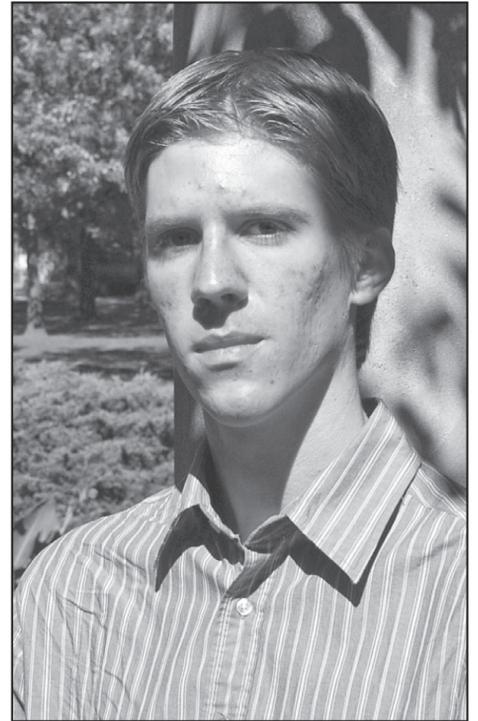
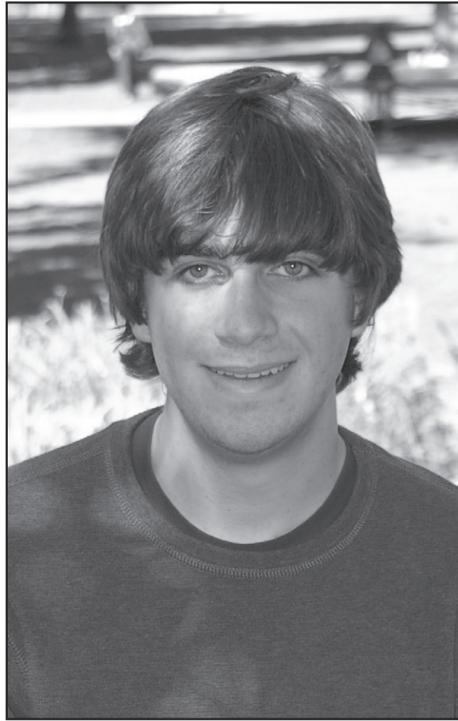
Szweczyk said other important criteria the committee considered were Missouri residency, ability to serve the entire two-year term and a complete understanding of University procedures. The application process required students to submit letters of recommendation from campus or community members, a copy of their high school transcript, a professional resumé and a cover letter expressing why the applicant would be the best choice for the position.

"We want representatives to have a clear vision of their role and obligation to the student body and the administration," Szweczyk said.

After a question-and-answer session with each candidate, the selection committee chose two applicants to meet with Student Senate, which also had an opportunity to question the candidates. Senate moved into closed session to make a final decision. Out of three applicants, junior Cody Sumter and sophomore Tom Hogan, both second-year students, were chosen to meet with Blunt.

"I saw Emily Kiddoo speak at an RHA meeting about the position, and I knew if I didn't apply I would be missing out on a chance of a lifetime," Sumter said.

Sumter, a computer science major, said he is well-rounded, something



Tom Hogan, left, applied for the Board of Governors position after hearing about it during his time on Student Senate. Cody Sumter, right, said he is looking forward to meeting Gov. Matt Blunt as a candidate for the Board of Governors position.

important for the Board of Governors student representative. He also said he thinks he fits the position because he is able to consolidate information in a short period of time and present it in a well-organized manner. Sumter said if he is chosen, he will meet with people familiar with the position so he can be effective at the job.

"I'm actually just really excited to meet Matt Blunt," he said. "I didn't even know that was part of the process until recently, and I was just amazed."

Hogan learned about the position in a different way.

"I knew about the Board of Governors position because I'd worked with the Student Senate," he said. "The more I read into it, I knew it was something I wanted to do."

Hogan, a physics major, said he thinks his dedication to coursework and extracurricular activities will put him on top because it shows a commitment to something he cares about. Hogan said he wants to help board members make informed decisions if he is chosen as the Board of Governors student representative. Hogan said he doesn't know how he feels

about meeting Matt Blunt.

"I'm excited," Hogan said. "[Blunt] is probably the highest ranking government official I will have met, but I'm a little intimidated to see how the process is going to happen and what will come of it."

The representative fulfills several duties as a non-voting member of the Board of Governors, including contributing to the processes of setting tuition and housing costs, approving campus renovations and writing and editing the Student Conduct Code. The representative also attends weekly Student Senate meetings.

Failure to verify financial aid results in delays for students

Students selected to confirm their financial aid face lengthy process

BY JASON QUALLS
for the Index

Students who haven't received their financial aid packages for the semester may be facing issues other than delayed scholarships or loans.

Verification, a process that the federal government requires of all colleges and universities in order to confirm information on a student's FAFSA, affects 500 to 600 students at Truman yearly, said Sue Neely, interim director of financial aid. Students selected for verification must submit special forms along with signed copies of W-2s and federal tax returns. Failing to do so by a certain date could result in a major delay in the arrival of the student's financial aid package.

The government requires each institution to verify at least 30 percent of its students annually, according to Truman's financial aid Web site.

"Some schools verify up to 100 percent of their students," Neely said. "We have enough trouble keeping up with the required 500 to 600."

The government hand-picks students who Truman's financial aid office must verify each year. The government selects students based on a variety of factors including discrepancies or edits on the student's FAFSA.

"A lot of students with self-employed parents are selected for verification," Neely said.

She said other causes for selection are unusually low income or unusually high amounts reported on the FAFSA's supplemental worksheets.

The process of verification remains confusing to some students. Senior Shahr Rezaiekhalthigh said the financial aid office fails to offer sufficient information about the significance of or reasons for verification.

"They just want you to blindly accept what verification is," Rezaiekhalthigh said.

Rezaiekhalthigh has submitted information for verification for the past three years. She said she has repeatedly received little or no information notifying her of the process or highlighting its importance.

Neely said the financial aid office sends out notifications as early as March.

"We receive names for verification on a rolling basis, depending on when the students fill out their FAFSA," she said. "Being very careful to get us back the forms that we request as soon as possible is crucial."

She said that although the financial aid office can make an estimate on a student's expected financial aid before verification, the verification

must be completed before the financial aid office can authorize the funds.

Still, the estimation is an important step in the financial aid process. The financial aid and business offices estimate incoming funds if a student has accepted the awards via Truview, Neely said. This step is not the same as verification, but it ensures that students are "memoed."

Marla Fernandez, student accounts supervisor, said memoed students do not face interest charges on their student accounts if their financial aid is delayed. She said this applies to students whose financial aid is delayed due to late verification, and that the interest rate for students is relatively low anyway: 0.75 percent for students on the standard payment plan and 0.5 percent for students on the flexible payment plan.

"A large majority of students make sure all these things are taken care of on time," Fernandez said. "But sometimes things don't come in when they should because of life."

Rezaiekhalthigh and other students have yet to receive their financial aid packages and face the potential interest charges along with account holds

until the funds arrive.

"Even when you think you're done with the verification mess, you're not," Rezaiekhalthigh said. "You're still behind on signing all the loan papers."

She said she has had to request multiple refund checks from the business office in order to receive the money as separate funds become available.

Although Neely said the financial aid office currently has fewer than 50 remaining verifications to process, she also said many students fail to submit all the required forms by June as requested. Although some verifications only require 15 to 20 minutes, some can take up to several weeks to process completely, leading to many students' outstanding debts with the University in August, Neely said.

Rezaiekhalthigh said she still is unclear about what financial aid verification entails.

"The financial aid office is completely passive about it," she said. "You have to go and talk to them about it yourself or you won't know anything. It's all about working the bureaucracy at Truman."

Still, Truman's procedures reflect federal guidelines. Neely said she stressed the importance of submitting the FAFSA early and, if needed, the verification forms promptly.

"It's important for students to remember that each year is a separate application," she said.

Students with further questions about verification should contact the financial aid office.

"A large majority of students make sure all these things are taken care of on time. But sometimes things don't come in when they should because of life."

Marla Fernandez
Student Accounts
Supervisor

The Truman State University Press and the University chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists welcome

Jason Offutt

instructor of journalism at Northwest Missouri State University, for a presentation and signing of his book

"Haunted Missouri: A Ghostly Guide to the Show-Me-State's Most Spirited Spots."

7 p.m. Oct. 12 in Student Union Building room 301.



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