

University takes next step toward Towne museum

BY JULIA HANSEN
Staff Reporter

Soon there will be a Towne museum. No, not a building archiving Kirksville — a museum named after Truman's late Ruth Warner Towne.

The University will begin accepting construction bids late this fall to renovate the former firehouse on Franklin Street, turning the building into the location of a museum and the Office of Admission.

The Campus Planning Office currently is doing final reviews of building designs completed by St. Louis-based architectural firm HKW, said Lori Shook, campus planning design project manager.

In the design plans, the old fire station's garage, currently the Truman Bookstore, will become the museum area.

The two-story portion of the building facing McClain Hall will be demolished, and a one-story building where the Office of Admission will be relocated will be added, extending out into the current parking lot, Shook said.

The University is working with two consultants to design the inside of the museum. One consultant's specialty is fabricating exhibits by building cases and displays. The other consultant will work with the concepts of stories that Truman is trying to tell, said Richard Coughlin, dean of libraries and museums.

One entire wall of the museum will feature a timeline that will tell a story of major events in the University's history. It will show history from the 1860's when Truman was North Missouri Normal School, to Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, to present-day Truman State University.

In addition to the wall featuring the timeline there will be about 20 other exhibits throughout the museum. Two of the planned exhibits focus on history around the northeast part of Missouri. One exhibit will illustrate how agriculture has been imperative in driving the economy. Another exhibit will feature Native American history in Northeast Missouri, Coughlin said.

The items that will be displayed in the museum, including papers and clothing, have been in storage for years in Kirk Memorial Building, Grim-Smith Hospital and Pickler Memorial Library.

With these impressive plans in the works, some might be left wondering whether the garage to the firehouse will be big enough to house all the history.

"I think that in a project like this we could probably use as much space as we could find, you know," said Randa Rawlins, chairwoman of the Board of Governors. "If we had a whole building, we could probably fill it up. ... [The firehouse is] certainly enough space for us to showcase the items that we want to, and then we can rotate other items. I think it's going to be a very nice space.



Now the temporary home of the University bookstore, the former Franklin Street firehouse, will open as the Ruth Warner Towne Museum, a space dedicated to preserving the history of Truman and northeast Missouri, in winter 2008.

I think we will all be very happy with what we have."

At one point the Kirk Memorial building was an option for renovation and use as a museum, but because of a lack of state funds, the renovation of Kirk has yet to take place, Rawlins said.

The museum was made possible by a donation of \$1 million in 1999 by Towne, a former Truman professor. Other donations also contributed to the implementation of the building, according to the Truman Today newsletter.

"I think that maybe one of the reasons Dr. Towne [donated the money] was because she knew that [Truman artifacts were not being showcased], and

she wanted to make sure that at some point in the future we were able to establish some physical location where people could appreciate these items," Rawlins said. "... I'm surmising that it was just her real true love for the University and her desire to make sure those things were preserved."

Coughlin is optimistic about reactions to the future museum.

"I think it is going to be very striking," he said. "I think it will be very well done and will get a lot of interest. It will capture the interest of visitors and it will also be of interest to people of the community."

Within the next several weeks

Coughlin will host an open gathering where students, faculty and community members can come to a session where they can see what the plans are and how they are shaping up for the upcoming museum, Coughlin said.

"This will be a wonderful first impression of the entire University," said University President Barbara Dixon, according to the Truman Today newsletter. "We have a beautiful campus, but this facility will serve as our welcome center, a place that radiates excitement and learning."

If bidding and construction continues as planned, the museum should be ready to open in winter 2008.

International student numbers surge to recent high

BY JULIA HANSEN
Staff Reporter

Namaste, Jambo, Neo-ho, Pri'vet and Konnichi-wa are words that may be helpful to know around Truman these days.

This semester the University welcomed its largest number of first-year international students since the early 1980s. The International Student Affairs Office [ISAO] recruits students from dozens of countries around the world to bring students to Truman.

Melanee Crist, assistant director for international education, said the ISAO's goal for the fall semester was to recruit 100 new students, but it beat its goal this semester and brought in 113, increasing the total number of international students to 242.

International students have been attending Truman since 1937, but the greatest number of students, around 350, were at Truman in the late 1960s or early 1970s, Crist said.

International student numbers are up this year because the ISAO began recruiting international students a few years ago. Before the World Trade Center tragedy in 2001, the ISAO brought in enough students by recruiting in a somewhat informal way through contacts or alumni around the world, Crist said.

"We were doing really well with 'armchair recruiting' up until 2001, and then [because of] both the reality and the perception that it was not a welcoming environment in the United States to international students ... the number of international students in the U.S. pretty dramatically declined, so as an institution we made the decision to recruit abroad because there is a lot of competition for international students," Crist said.

Students arrive in Kirksville

from countries such as Nigeria, Greece, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Zambia, Ethiopia, Finland and the Bahamas. Arriving in a town with a population of 16,988 is a surprise to some international students.

After being here for three years, junior international student Minh Ly-Le said she has adapted to American slang, different education systems and even Kirksville itself.

"[Kirksville] is a small town," Ly-Le said. "It's much smaller than where I live. My town is about 7 million. ... It is quieter [here], so I think it's nice because with less people we can know each other, and whenever you are on the street, you see someone you know you just say, 'Hi.'"

Beyond adjusting to the Kirksville community, international students face other barriers when arriving in the United States, like difference in language, food and schooling.

"When you're jet lagged and homesick and everything is totally different — from the food to the toothpaste — you can lose some language ability initially, but I guess probably culture shock is the biggest [setback] — just the magnitude of the difference of everyday life," Crist said.

One barrier Ly-Le has found at Truman is the on-campus hourly pay. Because she must pay bills, Ly-Le got a job with Truman's Sodexo food service. As an international student Ly-Le cannot get an off-campus job and because wages are low, she must work a lot of hours in addition to the hours she spends working on schoolwork, Ly-Le said.

Crist said international students characteristically are appreciative of the help they receive and often are serious students who are determined to thrive in school.

Can you match these phrases with their English translations and native lands?

1. Tayavura saydhih
2. Kiitos
3. Sain baina uu
4. Maaph garnuhos
5. Odabo

A. Hello
B. Excuse me
C. Please
D. Goodbye
E. Thank you

a. Nepal
b. Nigeria
c. Mongolia
d. Finland
e. Sri Lanka

Answers: 1.C, 2.E, 3.A, 4.B, 5.D

Design by Andrea Bailey/Index

"[International students] are very aware of the sacrifice that their families are making to send them abroad," Crist said. "... I think they're pretty driven to succeed cause it's a big, big investment for most countries to send their kids to the U.S. to study."

Thibaud Carissimo, a transfer international student from Paris, France, said he has only been in Kirksville for two weeks and is enjoying himself at Truman, even though he said he did not realize Kirksville was in the

middle of nowhere. Carissimo said he has just one complaint about his life in America.

"The food," he said. "It is not as good as France. Everything is so greasy."

Carissimo will study business at Truman for one semester before possibly taking on an internship in St. Louis.

Nepal, a small country north of India where Mt. Everest is located, is home to the most prevalent group of international students on campus. Of the 113

new international students, about 40 are Nepalese. Namaste Nepal is an organization at Truman composed of Nepalese students who host events like Himalayan night and other events to celebrate Nepalese festivals, according to the ISAO Web site.

Sumit Sharma, a sophomore international student from Nepal, has been attending Truman for a year. Sharma said he had never been to the United States before coming to attend school, and when he arrived, Kirksville

was not what he had imagined.

"It wasn't like what I expected, but it was nice because the people here were a lot more better than the people in other parts of the United States," Sharma said. "I found that I think Kirksville has people that are nicer than any other places. ... I used to live in a city in Nepal, but I like Kirksville. It's kind of different, but I like it."

Although Sharma says he does not really miss Nepal, he does miss one thing from home.

"I miss my mom," he said. To help international students become acclimated, Truman has a variety of programs, clubs and services to make new students more comfortable.

Truman has an African Student Association, Asian Student Association, International Club and Namaste Nepal. International Friends and Global Links connect a Kirksville family or Truman student with an international student to create lasting relationships and a taste of American culture, according to the ISAO Web site.

"When you bring students here from another culture you have to have some support systems for them, and so we concentrate not just on recruitment, but on retention, satisfaction and success," Crist said.

Although more international students will arrive for the Spring semester, the ISAO will continue to strive to increase their numbers.

"[The increasing numbers make me feel] great," Crist said. "We've been working really hard for this. It is very rewarding and very satisfying. We're keeping our fingers crossed [that we will get bigger numbers next year]. We can't guarantee anything, but I think we're definitely on the right track."

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