

# Sustainability initiative considered

Truman's Board of Governors will consider a plan to centralize "go green" efforts on campus

BY MICHELLE MARTIN  
Staff Reporter

The Sustainability Initiative, if approved, presents a tangible plan to turn Truman's environmental efforts into real steps toward a sustainable campus.

Truman alumna Judi Schweitzer is the president of Schweitzer and Associates, a real estate consulting firm for businesses and institutions interested in sustainable development. She said she is working with students and faculty to pass a resolution called the Truman Sustainability Initiative, which will actively move Truman's campus in the direction of sustainability. She said it is an economic system that weighs not only monetary costs and benefits, but also environmental and social costs and benefits.

"When you buy a gallon of gas there are costs to society that are outside that when you go to the pump," she said. "There's national defense, there's security, there's pollution, there's congestion, there's a lot of different costs that we're not paying for in our transaction."

Truman students working with Schweitzer are trying to pass the Sustainability Initiative by April 21, during Earth Week. Student Senate passed the resolution unanimously. If the Presidential Environmental Advisory Committee approves the initiative, Interim University President Darrell Krueger will choose whether to sign it into University commitment.

During a recent visit to Truman, Schweitzer asked faculty and students about sustainability initiatives on campus. Schweitzer said she discovered the idea of sustainability 20 years ago when she attended Truman. She said she wants to give back by enabling Truman's various "green" groups, such as ECO, Bulldog Biodiesel and the Bike Co-op, to have a campus-wide impact.

"Truman changed my life and my education there, and what I learned there, now 20 years later I'm putting into practice, and I'm bringing back to Truman, helping to sort of bring in to the next chapter of sustainability at Truman," Schweitzer said.

After talking with faculty members and students about the environmental movements in place at Truman, Schweitzer said she saw that numerous projects were student-run and



Alumnus Brett Wiley said Truman's high energy consumption makes sustainable development a moral responsibility for the campus.

independent of each other, rather than cohesively organized into a central group. Schweitzer said she noticed that someone needed to organize the groups to allow for greater collaboration and planning. The initiative would allow Truman to appoint a sustainability coordinator to oversee all efforts.

Opponents object to sustainability because of the initial cost, but the long term benefits usually outweigh the monetary expenses, said Brett Wiley, Truman alumnus and intern for Schweitzer and Associates. Wind turbines could originally cost millions of dollars, but through the years, they would generate rev-

enue by saving fuel and energy, he said.

Wiley said Truman's high energy consumption makes sustainable development a moral responsibility for the community.

"We consume more energy than 13 countries on a per capita basis," he said. "One of the countries, the Gaza strip, has 1.5 million residents. We're using more energy than countries that have a population of over one million."

The initiative strives for a sustainability-emphasizing curriculum, creative funding strategies and collaboration with the Northeast Missouri community in using the land for conservation, food and energy. The first step toward meeting these objectives will involve a one to two year sustainability assessment of campus to find where energy reductions are possible.

Truman's rural location also presents many possibilities related to local foods, he said.

"The average meal that goes to your plate travels 2,400 miles," Wiley said. "That doesn't even make sense. There are farmers that live five to 30 miles away from this campus, so why would we ship food that is over 1,500 to 2,500 miles away?"

There are two funding strategies for the initiative. One, called Environmental Service Company, initially audits a project and pays upfront for the cost in exchange for part of the energy savings. Pending approval by the Board of Governors, the library will undergo an energy usage audit utilizing this option. The other option, a Renewable Loan Fund, replaces energy savings generated from sustainability projects back into the loan fund.

Physical Plant director Karl Schneider heard about the sustainability initiative during the last meeting of the President's Environmental Advisory Committee. He said he still has budget concerns about the initiative.

"We can't afford within our own budget to spend extra money up front for things that we're going to pay back within a long period of time because our budget is set for maintenance and repair and operations expenses," he said.

However, Schneider said he is willing to look at any options set before him. Investing in more expensive but higher-quality equipment might be cheaper in the long run, he said.

"If there was a light bulb that cost a little more but lasted longer, that would benefit us because our budget wouldn't be eaten up by having to replace that item so often," he said.

# Missouri border state approves gay marriage

BY MARGARET HOOPER  
Staff Reporter

The Iowa Supreme Court struck down a 10-year-old law last week prohibiting same-sex marriages. This was the first decision allowing same-sex marriage in the heartland.

"If gay and lesbian people must submit to different treatment without an exceedingly persuasive justification, they are deprived of the benefits of the principle of equal protection upon which the rule of law is founded," according to the Iowa Supreme Court opinion that declared the 1998 law banning gay marriage unconstitutional.

This surprise ruling was followed Tuesday by Vermont's hair-line veto override of a bill legalizing same-sex marriages and a vote in the District of Columbia to recognize such marriages performed in other states.

Senior Ryan Shannon said the decisions in Iowa and Vermont were unexpected.

"It took me by surprise and a lot of people by surprise," Shannon said. "I hadn't heard much in the media before then, and I think it's a really good start for the Midwest."

He said he supports same-sex marriage because it represents a move away from the "separate-but-equal" status of heterosexual marriage and homosexual domestic partnerships but said he doubts he would take advantage of the ruling himself.

"If people don't want you to be doing something so much, and you're going to receive so much hate anyway,

why bother giving in to their rituals, their ceremonies?" Shannon said.

A.J. Bockelman, Executive Director of PROMO, a Missouri organization advocating for equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, said the Iowa decision allows those from other states to marry, and many Missouri couples may cross the border to take advantage of the ruling, according to an April 3 press release. However, same-sex marriages would not be recognized in Missouri because of the 2004 Missouri constitutional amendment limiting marriage to one man and one woman.

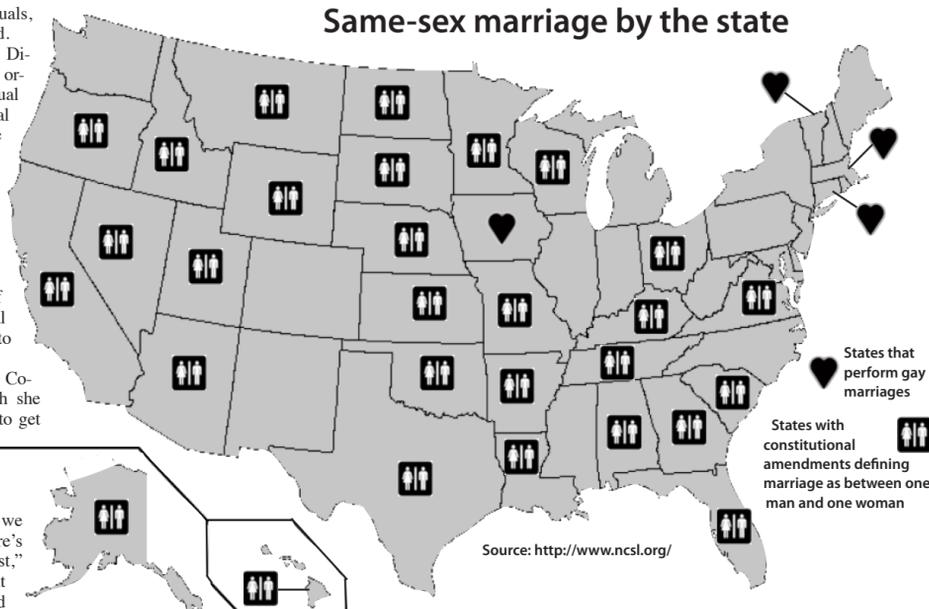
Freshman Bre Palmer, Prism Co-group leader, said that although she personally does not have plans to get married, she was glad to hear about the ruling.

"I think it's really good to show people that the Midwest isn't really all conservative, and we aren't all of one opinion, that there's a lot of diversity in the Midwest," Palmer said. "It's something that a lot of Americans support and that a lot of people are interested in."

Palmer said she does not expect a similar decision in Missouri anytime soon because she thinks overturning the constitutional amendment would be difficult.

"I think there will probably be a federal amendment or decision before Missouri overturns [the amendment]," Palmer said.

## Same-sex marriage by the state



Opponents of same-sex marriage have denounced the Iowa Supreme Court's decision. Tom Minnery, senior vice president of Focus on the Family Action, said in a press release that the decision "tramples on the will of Iowa citizens" and called for Iowa to enact a constitutional amendment similar to the one in place in Missouri.

"The people of Iowa can have the last

say on what social policy guides their lives by passing a marriage amendment like 30 other states have done," Minnery said, according to a press release.

Senior Elizabeth Koballa said the decision in Iowa is encouraging, but that she also doubts any such decision in Missouri will be forthcoming.

"There's a long way to go for Missouri," Koballa said. "Missouri will

probably be one of the last states to recognize [same-sex marriage]."

Koballa said she thinks it will be at least 20 years before the federal government steps in and requires states to recognize marriages from other states, even though the expectation is written into the Constitution. Despite the wait, she said she thinks the recognition of same-sex marriage is inevitable.

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