

OUR VIEW

Blunt veto silences students' voices

Call us crazy, but we think students deserve a voice in our education. We're the ones whose daily lives are affected by the decisions made by the University's governing body, the ones who enjoy the benefits or suffer the consequences of University policies. Heck, we're the ones paying for the University to function.

As a result, we get a little cranky when politicians make decisions that silence students' voices. This is what happened when Gov. Matt Blunt vetoed Missouri Senate Bill 873, which would create a voting position for the student representative on the University of Missouri-Columbia's Board of Curators. (See story, page 2)

In a statement, Blunt claimed that allowing the Board of Curators' student member to have voting rights would create a problem because it would create "stakeholder representatives," whereas according to Blunt, currently "the nine curators represent the university as a whole rather than a specific university interest, cause or stakeholder group." Aside from the fact that Blunt's description of a completely unbiased, interest-free governing board is unlikely to be accurate, shouldn't the students be the one group that does receive representation? Students pay tuition that plays a large part (enough to give them a controlling share, to continue with Blunt's business metaphor) in keeping a university up and running.

What makes Blunt's veto so surprising is the overwhelming support the bill received in the Missouri legislature: It passed 31-2 in the Senate and 100-47 in the House. Given these margins, the bill easily could win the two-thirds majority in each house needed to override the veto, and we encourage Missouri legislators to do so. The "veto that launched 1,000 Facebook protests" has implications not only for Mizzou but also for Truman.

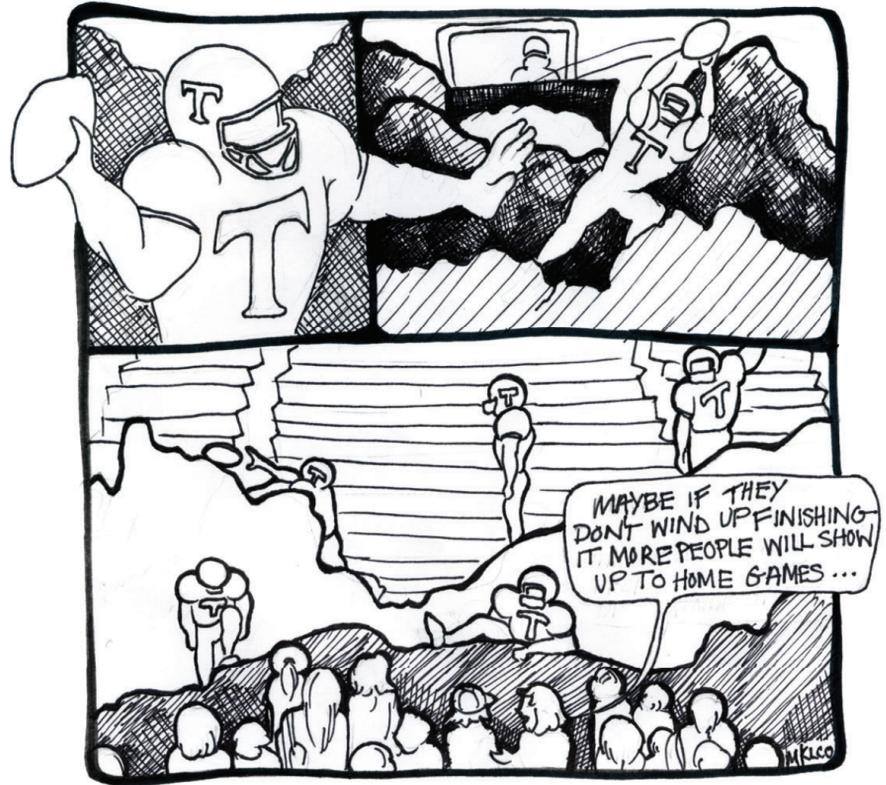
Truman's Board of Governors is similar to the Board of Curators because both governing bodies have members who are appointed and qualified under Missouri statute — hence the need for a bill in the first place. Both boards make the major decisions that affect their respective universities and contain a non-voting

student representative. There is, however, a slight difference between the ages of the student representative — most students serving on the Board of Curators attend Mizzou's professional or graduate school, whereas student representatives on Truman's Board of Governors typically begin serving during their junior year as undergraduates. However, given that Truman students continually have proven themselves to be intelligent, conscientious, dedicated and hard-working, we have no doubt about their ability to take on the duties of a voting board member.

Placing a student representative with full voting powers on Mizzou's Board of Curators would set a precedent for a voting student representative on Truman's Board of Governors. The ability to vote would have a dramatic effect on the position, changing it from a mostly ceremonial role to one with legitimate power.

Granted, the other members' votes could easily outweigh that of the student representative in some cases, but on divisive matters it could be the student's vote that tips the balance. The notion of having this type of influence would undoubtedly increase student interest in the position, preventing reoccurrences of the Board of Governors' last search for a student representative, in which three interview spots were offered but only two qualified applicants could be found. (See the Sept. 27, 2007 issue of the Index) Allowing the student representative to have a vote that he or she would be held accountable for would make him or her a true equal, and might change the position's appearance as strictly a résumé-builder, enticing many more students to apply.

The current Board of Governors student representative, senior Cody Sumter, certainly is qualified and capable, but a larger pool of candidates would allow the Board of Governors and the governor of Missouri, who makes the final selection, to choose an outstanding student representative. As a full-fledged board member with voting rights, this individual not only would gain valuable career experience but also would finally give students the voice we deserve.



Letters to the Editor

Abortion bill provides protection for women

The editorial "Women deserve to hear about abortion pros, cons" in the May 1, 2008 issue of the Index concerned my House Bill 1831. This legislation, passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 113 to 33, strengthens Missouri's abortion informed consent law and makes it a crime to coerce a woman into having an abortion. Ideally such a law would be unnecessary. Unfortunately there are all too many examples of women being coerced into having abortions in our state.

This bill would give women the right to obtain specific information prior to an abortion. The bill is very specific as to what conduct is prohibited. It would be illegal to coerce a woman into having an abortion by:

- *Committing an already illegal act such as assault, battery, kidnapping or threatening with a deadly weapon,
- *Stalking or perpetrating violence against a woman,
- *Threatening to fire a woman from her job unless she has an abortion or
- *Threatening to take away a woman's scholarship unless she has an abortion.

This bill is designed to protect women and ensure that they are acting freely and are fully informed should they choose to have an abortion. This is why the bill received such strong support. I look forward to the prompt action of the Missouri Senate and the Governor to protect Missouri women.

Robert F. Onder, M.D., J.D.
State Representative,
District 13

Jarrett's column helps stimulate debate

Phil Jarrett's end-of-last-semester clarion call for balance in the abortion debate merits further support, in terms of the window he is bravely trying to open in this incredibly hostile to free-choicers backwater.

However, is he correct to state that abortion is seen as "repugnant" by all sides? Especially as he himself alights on the one-sidedness of mainly male, religious GOP Missouri State legislators in trying to artificially curtail women's clinic entry options in offensive, alarmist

anti-termination language.

In proof of my case on this point, I am able to cite a former Chicago girlfriend I loved before my wife of now 25 years. She was a wonderful, professional legal firm person who was utterly honest. She did not like children, and yet, she adored the eros side of love and care, avowedly. For her, having an abortion was, without hesitation, a vital, if occasional, form of protective contraception, not repugnant at all.

Secondly, I think Jarrett skirts the religious patriarchal faith and religious prejudice issue, with which conservative legislators and their student apologists buttress their hostility in needless guilt complexes they foster to deter people from forming relationships as in the case I have just cited. This misconception of Christianity is one I, as a rationalist anti-literalist Unitarian, find questionably unthinking to the extent of, indeed, sick repugnance against such patriarchs of both genders.

The late bishop theologians in my father's UK Anglican church pointed out that Christ was the last person to be such an anti-woman Puritan. He publicly defended Mary the prostitute and protected his most beloved young male apostle John, in terms clearly not just platonic. And he was "coercive," to use Jarrett's wiser language, against temple capitalists, was he not? Thanks to Jarrett for initiating a saner local debate, compared with the sheer intolerance the local bigots impose upon free-choicers.

Larry Iles
Kirksville Resident

Editor in Chief welcomes incoming freshmen

If you're reading this, it means you've not only located an Index, but you cared enough to get to page four.

It also means you're going to be just fine this year, so welcome to Truman and welcome to the Index! By now you've probably figured out that Kirksville isn't exactly a bustling metropolis, but that doesn't mean there isn't plenty of news and events to keep your eye out for. That's where we come in: to make the job easier for you.

You can find us in bins across campus (and around town) every

Thursday morning — 20 pages of the latest happenings at Truman, news from all over Kirksville, movie and music reviews, interviews with some of the most interesting people you'll find around town and the latest updates on Truman athletics. The bottom line is that it's our job to keep track of these things so that you don't stumble through four years of college Belushi-style without ever really knowing what's going on around you.

So maybe you just pick us up to scan a headline or to check in on one of Truman's athletic teams. Maybe you've heard about something big going on at Truman and you want to find out more about it or maybe — and trust me, we've all been there — you need something to occupy you when you can't find any of your friends in the dining halls. Whatever the reason, we hope you'll make the Index a Thursday staple.

We're a pretty well-established media source around town — and one that happens to be celebrating our 100th anniversary this year — and we take our job of keeping you informed pretty seriously. We're your public forum, and we're also entirely student-produced (yeah, that's probably one of us sitting across the classroom from you, staring intensely and somewhat creepily as you scan our work, trying to determine just what you're thinking about that photo/design/story/column we spent the week creating and polishing).

We wouldn't be here without readers, and we can't know what you're thinking unless you tell us. Got a juicy news tip? Let us in on what you know at indextips@gmail.com. Maybe you're not so fond of something we published. Write a letter to the editor or e-mail your thoughts to index@truman.edu. You can even let me personally know what's on your mind at jpw605@truman.edu.

At the end of the day we're just students too, but we take great pride in what we fill our pages with each week. We're all in this together, so let us offer you some insight on what's going on at Truman. We hope the Index makes your day a little brighter and your knowledge a little broader. Here's to a great four years.

Julie Williams
Editor in Chief

INDEX

Serving the University community since 1909
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The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at index@truman.edu or on our Web site at www.trumanindex.com. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, copy chief and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

Advertising Policy

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What was going on in the INDEX?

10 years ago — August 17, 1998

Violette Hall reopened after undergoing two years of renovations designed to add more classroom and office space.

15 years ago — August 21, 1993

Flooding caused millions of dollars of damage to colleges and universities throughout the Midwest. Truman — then called Northeast Missouri State — was not affected.

25 years ago — August 21, 1973

Northeast Missouri State's Freshman Orientation Program featured a pig roast that took place in Red Barn Park.