

Orientation sessions offer growth opportunities



Kelsey Landhuis

Although I am only now entering my third year at the University, I am starting to feel old. The temptation to use phrases like, "When I was a freshman" when I speak to first-year students grows stronger every day. Usually I can resist the temptation to sound like a crotchety old woman, but this time I am going to give in.

So here it goes: You freshmen have it easy. When I was your age, Truman Week was the first time I met anyone in my class. My parents drove me here from my hometown in Iowa and dropped me off to start my college career not knowing a soul, and it was terrifying. Fortunately,

the University has changed its policy since then and implemented the Summer Orientation program. Unfortunately, many incoming freshmen failed to appreciate the advantages they had over previous incoming classes.

I am admittedly slightly biased in favor of Summer Orientation. My fellow student orientation leaders and I invested a lot of time and energy into the program, as did staff members from many offices across campus, including the Office of Admission, Residence Life and the Residential College Program. Like any pilot program, orientation had its flaws, but many of these will be corrected for next year's sessions. Despite these flaws, Summer Orientation succeeded in accomplishing two objectives that Truman Week could not address: allowing incoming freshmen to take ownership of their education and providing opportunities for them

to make connections with fellow students before moving on campus to start the year.

The first objective was relatively simple to accomplish. By allowing students to enroll in their own classes, the University made them feel in control of their own destinies. Yes, online enrollment can be confusing, frustrating and stressful, especially for first-time TruView users, but what incoming freshmen need to realize is that they are the first class to be given this opportunity. Prior to this year, academic advisers enrolled freshmen in their first semester of classes. This was problematic because without knowing their advisees personally, advisers had no way of knowing whether a student would appreciate a 7:30 a.m. religion class or struggle to stay awake through it. Now, incoming freshmen have the satisfaction of knowing they picked their schedules themselves.

The second objective, making connections with fellow students, was more difficult to address. Many incoming freshmen were so concerned with enrolling in classes that they failed to realize that forming relationships was an equally important aspect of Summer Orientation. In several cases, students who enrolled in the morning simply skipped the lunch activities and the afternoon information sessions. Many students participated, but only reluctantly, or attended, but refused to participate. Yes, the games were cheesy. Yes, it can be awkward to make conversation with people you don't know. But the students who participated wholeheartedly in these activities had a much more enjoyable Summer Orientation experience than those who didn't.

If you were among the non-participants at Summer Orientation, just look at Truman Week as a redo. Many of the activities that will take

place this week might seem silly on the surface, but if you bite the bullet and get involved, you might find yourself actually enjoying Ridiculous Relays or Lip Sync. At the very least you will be able to meet your fellow competitors and form relationships that might develop into friendships.

So what's holding you back? If you are afraid that jumping on the bandwagon will have a negative effect on your individuality or "coolness," you would do well to remember the words spoken by one of my fellow orientation leaders: "You go to Truman now. You're not cool." The sooner you accept this and embrace your inner geekiness, the better your University experience will be, so get out there and get involved.

Kelsey Landhuis is a senior English major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa

AROUND THE QUAD

What was the best piece of advice you received before coming to the University?



"Be open to the locals and learn more."

Abigail Lee exchange student



"Be yourself."

Elsa Armentia exchange student



"My parents told me to protect myself."

Lulu incoming freshman



"No advice is the best advice."

Antonio Bonome exchange student

Waiting to rush allows new students to explore options



Jackie Gonzalez

Welcome to the infamous Truman Week experience. You're likely experiencing one of the last (if not the final) of these legendary weeks. You likely have a few things on your mind: anxieties about future coursework, searches for every social endeavor imaginable, and of course, the possibility (or eager enthusiasm) of going Greek.

Granted, you won't hear about sorority or fraternity life during the first week or so. There's a list of elaborate rules to prevent unfair advantages and establish an equal playing field for organizations. Yet year after year I have seen people and groups that have found loopholes. Truman Week is seemingly the biggest week for recruitment, as recruitment numbers are a source of pride and boasting. Although members are prohibited from talking about their specific affiliations, they're more than willing to talk about their experiences if asked, and they still can wear their organization's

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"letters", or group name. So familiarize yourself with the Greek alphabet and be prepared for a wave of foreign symbols coming your way.

Hopefully, your ideas of Greek life extend beyond a popular television show (that I happen to love) or any movie cliché. I'm not Greek, but I'm pretty sure it's safe to say most of our organizations aren't based on materialism and sleaze. And although I don't know the inner workings of Greek social organizations at Truman, I think I have come to value most of the facets of Greek life through other organizations. You can too!

If there is one piece of advice I can give you as you start your journey as a Bulldog, it is this: Don't commit yourself immediately. Don't rush during your first semester. It might seem tempting, but my decision to explore my campus options

for a full semester before fully committing myself to any organization was one of the best decisions I've made at Truman. By looking at your options, you can develop your own opinions about campus life and figure out exactly how you want to spend your time here.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that many social fraternities and sororities on campus are ridiculously intense. They demand much time, money and respect before truly becoming a worthwhile experience. Devoting so much time to one particular group your first semester might prevent you from developing relationships with other non-affiliates, not to mention force you to put academics on the back burner from the start. A commitment to a Greek social organization is almost always a permanent one, so waiting even a semester still would give you three full years of Greek immersion.

Be true to your own interests and the best and most beneficial of opportunities will come to you. Your first semester already will be filled with so many new ideas and perspectives, and there's always next semester.

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

Practicing proper personal hygiene challenges freshmen



Brenna McDermott

Once upon a time, my sheets were always clean, my dirty clothes never piled up and my bathroom never warranted a visit from the health inspector. There seemed to be this magical force that motivated me to take out my trash, iron my clothes and buy floss.

But it wasn't magic. It was Mommy.

Good old Mom. If you're like me, you've probably seen the magic Mom can do with the power of persuasion and fabric softener.

Once I lived in a residence hall, that force was flushed right down the drain. And it is about to be for you too.

Now there is no one to yell at you to cut your toenails, to do your laundry or to wash behind your ears. The freedom is a great feeling. Knowing that if you don't pick up your clothes no one will threaten to throw them out is a revelation. But at some point, you're going to need those clothes that have been lying on

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the floor for months.

So here's the thing: Now you have to kick your own butt to make sure you don't get disgusting. And it might not be as easy as Mom made it look.

With all this freedom college brings, there is no one looking out for you but you.

So just because someone isn't there telling you to shower, that doesn't mean you should have a contest with your roomies to see who can be the smelliest for the longest. Looking (or smelling) like a scrub doesn't impress the ladies or gents down the hall, or your professors. Making a good first impression is necessary, and it will never go away. It is your job alone to make sure you don't look like a bum to everyone you meet.

Cleanliness in general is something you have to take initiative with. Of course, you don't have to take any of my advice away with you. You can clean as much or as little as you like. You can leave your

dirty dishes all over your room, and you can feel free to leave the headache of bathing for another month. Of course, your roommates might call you smelly and you probably won't have a single date, but that is, of course, a personal choice. Just stay away from me.

And that is the great thing about college. Your choices are all your own. Unless you are violating a health code, no one is going to throw you into a shower against your will. No one will tell you what to do. And that can be hard for all of us at times. We, as humans, all look for guidance, whether it be a higher power or a friend's advice. But in the end, we all deal with our issues on our own.

Your personal hygiene (or lack thereof) is completely up to you. How your future is shaped is your choice. Will you face the mirror and tell yourself when you are getting gross? Will you have the courage to face your problems and change them? When you realize you are out of deodorant and you can either go without or take 10 minutes to buy some from the grocery store, it could go either way for you. How will you handle it?

Brenna McDermott is a sophomore English and political science major from St. Louis, Mo.

Nations should use Olympic Games to address global issues



Andrew Kindiger

If nations of the world can come together every two years to compete peacefully and respect the talents and abilities of diverse athletes, it shouldn't be so challenging to express these sentiments in other venues. The Olympics provide for a wide array of cultures and ideologies to be tolerated so many nations can assemble in the same place for a short time. However, after the games are over and the athletes return home, the same hostilities and aggressions between nations remain.

Politically, the world has entered an age in which agreement does not have to be achieved for nations to have a mutually beneficial relationship. America still will trade with China despite its disagreement with how China treats its citizens in the wake of economic expansion. Many countries chose to waive their resentment of China's history of human rights abuse so that the Olympic Games could take place in Beijing. The Chinese government recognizes these political faults and has promised to slowly change its politics in an effort to grant its citizens more freedom. However, just like the positive sentiments of the Olympic Games dissipate between nations as the events end, China will continue to lack religious tolerance and keep its citizens from challenging the government.

For problems like this to end, the nations of the world are going to have to feign interest in each other much more often than once every two years. An interest in the political dysfunctions of the international community should not only interest presidential candidates and political delegates. Those who tune in to the Olympics on TVs world-wide should surf the Internet or read a newspaper with 1/8 the interest they give diving or beach volleyball.

It might seem like too much to ask for casual TV viewers to start

taking an interest in the politics of the global community, but thanks to technological advancements like wireless communication and the Internet, the world has become a little smaller. Communicating ideas to a vast network of people is no longer a problem. Now all we need is interest in the world community.

It is also time for people to start taking an interest in other people. Instead of putting our faith in politicians to solve the problems and disagreements between other nations, regular citizens can take a more active role in dialogue that could foster better international relationships. Simply becoming more aware of the problems and trials facing other nations will help people gain a better perspective of the challenges that need to be met in order to bring nations closer together.

Soon, more and more problems are going to confront the Olympic Games. This year the games continued despite a war in Iraq, violence in Georgia and constant turmoil between Israel and Palestine. How much more violence will have to be overlooked during the games two years from now?

Surely, if nations from all over the globe can come together in Beijing and interact peacefully in light of massive international dysfunction, the same nations can gather together and discuss plans to confront the problems facing the global community.

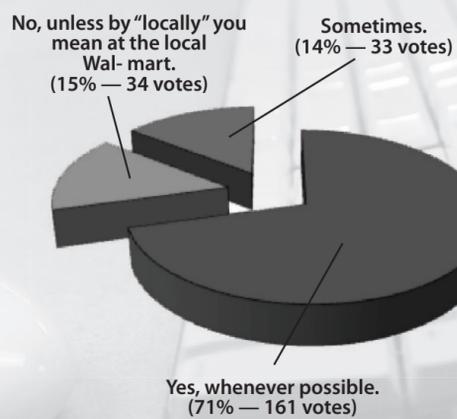
If those who were interested in the athletic performance of other nations were equally interested in the political relationships between the same nations, much more could be accomplished with only a slight shift in perspective.

So to everyone who keeps tabs on gold medal acquisitions and world records, try to expand your appreciation for international cooperation a little more. The impressive abilities of Olympic athletes would pale in comparison to the ability of the international community if nations could respect each other with the same sentiments that are expressed during the Olympics.

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WEB POLL

Do you buy locally produced goods?



This week's question:

Do you agree with Gov. Blunt's veto of students' Board of Curators voting rights?

Vote online at trumanindex.com