

OUR VIEW

Editorial board makes University wish list

In keeping with the holiday spirit, the Editorial Board decided to help out the University by writing its Christmas list. We think all the members of the University community have been good this year and deserve to be rewarded, so here's what we came up with:

1.) A permanent president. We think Darrell Krueger is doing a wonderful job as interim president, but he shouldn't have to do it for 12 years like the last "interim president," Jack Magruder, did. The Board of Governors should work quickly to find a highly qualified candidate who can effectively lead the University for many years to come.

2.) More money. Keep your fingers crossed that state funding continues to climb and that when the dust settles Jan. 21, Truman still can count on money from MOHELA. (Pershing Building is in sore need of renovations that will be a lot tougher to get without MOHELA funds). Without adequate state funding the University can't offer competitive pay for faculty and staff and there will be little incentive for high quality professors to come to Kirksville. When the budget is tight, higher education is usually one of the first places to get cut. Governor-elect Jay Nixon and the new Missouri Congress need to make sure funding for higher education is a top priority for the state.

3.) Exterior card swipes on residence halls. (These would make great stocking stuffers.) The University made a tremendous improvement in security by installing automatically locking doors on all residence hall rooms, but why stop there? We know it's in the works as each residence hall is renovated, but is there no way to speed up this process? Exterior card swipes would provide an extra level of security and ensure students' safety in common areas like lounges.

4.) Improved technology. Technological innovations are continuous, and the University needs to make sure it stays up to date. But the latest technol-

ogy is useless if no one knows how to use it. Training sessions should be offered for students and especially for faculty. University administration should thoroughly research available technology to make sure funds are spent on useful tools rather than wasted on unnecessary luxuries. We'd like to see more smart classrooms and fewer scrolling video screens in academic buildings like Ophelia Parrish.

5.) Better recruitment strategies. We know the Office of Admission is working on this. Broadening the recruiting area is a great place to start. But it doesn't matter how good the sale is if the product doesn't live up to the hype. University administration should focus on addressing fundamental issues, rather than throwing a glossy coat of paint on a rotting foundation. As "Field of Dreams" taught us, "if you build it, they will come."

6.) A lasting vision. Throughout the course of its history, the University has undergone too many name changes and mission changes to count. If the goal is to become the premier liberal arts and science university in the Midwest or even in the country, this concept needs to be communicated to everyone within the University community. Faculty, staff and administration need to determine what measurable steps can be taken to achieve this mission and see it through to its completion.

7.) A building named after Barbara Dixon. Dixon was the University's first female president, which is an achievement worthy of recognition. West Campus Suites was constructed during her tenure and still lacks a permanent name three years after its completion. Dixon Suites has a nice ring to it.

Some of the items on this list are more feasible than others, but we think all of them are achievable. If any of them did show up under the University's Christmas tree on Dec. 25, it would be a happy holiday. We can only hope that University officials will take some of these suggestions to heart.

CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail index@truman.edu, call us at 660-785-4449, or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo. 63501.

CARTOON

BY RYAN CAROTHERS



Letters to the Editor

Kirksville has plenty of shopping opportunities

As Kirksville's Chamber of Commerce Director, I wanted to follow up on the Nov. 20 article about students turning to online shopping because of Kirksville's lack of shopping options. I am proud of the unique shopping opportunities that Kirksville offers. To back up that opinion, I often stop and visit with folks who are shopping in Kirksville and ask if they are from the area or if they are from out of town. A Columbia shopper told me that he and his wife loved to shop in Kirksville. He complimented the community on great restaurants and unique retail shops. He told me he and his wife simply enjoy driving to Kirksville to shop and have a meal. They appreciate the smaller stores and lack of waiting and crowds.

In closing, I would like to encourage everyone to visit every retail store in town and check out the local shopping opportunities. I have a feeling you will be pleasantly surprised.

*Alisa R. Kigar
Executive Director, Kirksville Area
Chamber of Commerce*

Editorial Board fails to address portfolio issues

The current portfolio process is far from perfect, but giving it the major overhaul as suggested in the Nov. 20 Our View would neither change our need for a new curriculum nor solve all the problems the Editorial Board notes. The Editorial Board states the curriculum commission was changing the Liberal Studies Program "in order to generate senior portfolios that are more useful to faculty." If that were true, it would be a great example of the tail wagging the dog. The curriculum commission is trying to come up with a better curriculum, period. The suggested models change the goals of the portfolio to ultimately improve learning, not simply to get better data. The current portfolio was not designed to "provide a complete picture of students' growth in writing skill," so it's unsurprising that it does not. In a different general education program, the portfolio could be the place to do that, replacing the current portfolio, the former sophomore writing experience and maybe even the writing portfolio often submitted in English 190.

Reflecting on early works could be part of how a student demonstrates writing competence or could guide a student on whether to pursue more writing opportunities. One of the problems the Editorial Board cites with the current portfolio is that "many students submit writing samples from advanced classes within their major. As a result, portfolios are a poor indicator of the quality of students' liberal arts and sciences experiences." This is why students are asked to identify the source of the submission. Submissions from courses that fulfill LSP requirements are tracked separately. If students are gaining the same knowledge and skills in the LSP and the major, we want to know. For example, if most students were doing better interdisciplinary thinking in their majors than they were in Junior Interdisciplinary Seminar courses, we wouldn't have needed JINS courses. The Editorial Board's suggestion to make the portfolio an ongoing project already is being worked on and is one of the suggestions within the commission's models. Previously, requiring a CD submission

each semester significantly would have increased the required time for students. Online submission makes ongoing entries more viable but won't entirely replace a reflection as a senior.

Encouraging students to submit items from specific courses certainly has advantages. This is why it is incorporated into some of the curriculum commission's models. However, it works against the Editorial Board's concern that "senior portfolios rarely represent their best work." For example, students who did excellent critical thinking in their major would not be able to submit it if we only requested information from English 190 courses. Learning experiences that were part of the co-curriculum also would never be captured. Submission of "best work" and restricting the source of the work inherently are contradictory. Lack of student motivation to complete the portfolio probably does create some problems with the data. But the works themselves were prepared for a class or another experience, so their quality doesn't necessarily depend on how interested the students are in the portfolio. If student motivation were a big influence on whether students chose appropriate works to submit, then how much time a student reports spending on the portfolio should correlate negatively with their scores for the portfolio. It does not.

*Dr. Karen Smith, former director
Dr. K. Scott Alberts, current
director of LAS portfolio assessment*

Costs of going green are greater than benefits

I think I finally found something Molly Skyles and I have in common: We are both annoyed with the recent "green" trend. But the commonality ends there. Skyles thinks people are not doing enough, whereas I think people are doing too much. I don't say this because I hate the environment or like destroying natural resources, I just say this because going green has its costs, some of which outweigh its benefits.

In her column, Skyles mentioned doing little things like not using plastic bags at the grocery store and not running water when brushing your teeth. Recycling or reducing consumption does nothing to save resources in the long run because if they remain plentiful and cheap someone will use them. As we use resources like oil for fuel or land for garbage, they become more scarce and therefore more expensive until eventually they become so expensive that alternatives like wind, solar and nuclear power or recycling become relatively less expensive, at which point we will use them instead. Some resources, like water, do not have alternatives. But all we have to do to clean our water is purify it, or if we run out of fresh water, we can take the salt out of salt water.

Because the resources won't run out, just use the cheapest resource available and I promise, everything will be OK. Unlike the issue of resources, we might need to take some action to protect our environment. Pollution and other negative effects humans have on the environment are real, and because no one owns the air or water, there is no one with an incentive to keep it clean. At the same time, government regulation often is costly and attempts at reducing fossil fuel consumption are often guided by special interest, like farmers who want to make ethanol. I'm not just talking about the cost to U.S. businesses or consumers. When food

prices rise, people in poor countries starve, and when expensive regulations are imposed on developing economies, more people die or live in poverty.

We need to start attaching costs to pollution and global warming and then make the decision as to which regulations have a net benefit and which are simply wasting resources and costing lives. I urge our newly elected representatives to work with each other to find those green projects that are worth the costs imposed on U.S. taxpayers, businesses and people around the world. When attempting to fix environmental problems, we need to remember that there are ways to find compromises, like free market solutions, that cost less and add value for everyone. So next time you investigate the green movement, I urge you to do some more research and think about it in a new light.

*Justin Logan
junior*

Truman students have right to vote in Kirksville

Mr. Van Vleck, I was dismayed after reading your Nov. 20 comments about the Truman community. You questioned the motivations of students voting locally and implied you lost because of our votes. I would like to address each of these two points.

In your letter, you made a bold assumption that Truman students are somehow uneducated on local issues. True, some people are uninformed but it is incorrect, not to mention disrespectful to your alma mater, to claim some of the brightest students in the Midwest did not do their research. A number of organizations were dedicated to registering Truman students to vote here in Kirksville and worked diligently to support their own opinions while educating the students in the process. Given the political environment on campus, I would argue rather than Truman students were generally more knowledgeable of the issues than some citizens of Kirksville.

As for voting locally, I think Truman students have every right to do it. We eat, shop and pump gas at local stores and restaurants. We volunteer at area charities and businesses and pay rent, utilities and taxes just like other Kirksvillians. The local elections directly affect my life as a citizen and taxpayer of Kirksville (i.e. the public smoking ban). Although I may only live in town for four to five years, I represent a student population that has been in Kirksville for more than 140 years. My decisions in present local elections affect future students like me. You ask that the students "be sensitive to the lifelong residents of the area," but you have overlooked Truman. We are economically, politically and historically connected to the community as well.

So Mr. Van Vleck, you were exactly correct when you insinuated that you lost because of the Truman community. You did not appeal to us. Please do not complain that you lost unfairly and presume we are ignorant. Politicians represent their entire community, not just part of it. We are an integral element of this community and cannot be disregarded as we demonstrated last month. I would keep that in mind for your next campaign.

*Tony Dwiggins
senior*

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