MAGRUDER | A.T. Still University renews former Truman President Jack Magruder's contract

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has made the job a pleasure so I decided, 'yes I'll accept that,'" Magruder said.

The contract will see a multi-year extension, according to a press release from A.T. Still. Magruder said he did not wish to comment on the exact date the contract extension will end because it was not specified in the press release.

Magruder said the Board's decision to extend his contract was unanimous, and he would not have been able to accept if it had been any other way — he couldn't work with a Board that didn't want him there or didn't have confidence in him. He said he has had a wonderful relationship with the Board of Trustees at A.T. Still, similar to his relationship with the Board of Governors during his time as University President at Truman.

"I'm really delighted with the support here," Magruder said. "It's a similar kind of support I experienced at Truman."

Magruder said that in these difficult economic times, A.T. Still is not as badly affected as public colleges and universities because 88 to 90 percent of A.T. Still's income comes from student tuition rather than state funds, but A.T. Still is offering a much more fiscally conservative budget for the next year because of an anticipated ripple affect associated with public colleges and universities. Magruder said A.T. Still still will offer pay raises to its faculty, but for modest amounts. A.T. Still tuition is being raised at a slower rate, he said.

"Last year the tuition went up 5 percent," Magruder said. "This year for [A.T. Still], the tuition is going up 3.5 percent. We're just being very careful."

Magruder said A.T. Still has many good things going for it: more applicants than the university can accommodate, a very high graduation rate and loans available to medical students.

RANK | General secretary of the American Association of University Professors calls for a moratorium of college rankings

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said she thinks Rhoades has a point.

"The AAUP secretary is suggesting U.S. News halt the rankings because he feels colleges have gone overboard to manipulate the elements that would elevate a ranking, sacrificing what education's true purpose is — to educate students at all socioeconomic levels," Morin said. "Many institutions have shifted dollars into scholarships for merit aid which ends up going to students who could afford college without that assistance."

Truman is categorized in the "Universities-Master's" category of the rankings. Morin said the schools in this category are defined as those that provide a full range of undergraduate programs and some master's level programs. The category is divided into four geographic areas, with Truman in the Midwest category. Truman has ranked number one in this category for the past 12 years.

The rankings are based on data taken from surveys and information gathered from public databases. Morin said 25 percent of the ranking is based on subjective information collected from peer institutions in each category.

"The president, provost and I are sent a peer assessment survey each year listing all the colleges in our category," Morin said. "We're asked to rate the quality of the academic programs for schools in the same ranking category, including Truman. U.S. News acknowledges that peer assessment is subjective, but views it as important from the perspective that a distinguished college can help graduates get good jobs or get into competitive graduate schools."

Sweet Briar College in Virginia now is refusing to fill out the reputational portion of the survey.

"Last year we started not submitting the reputational portion of the U.S. News ranking," dean of admissions Ken Huus said. "It's not a boycott, necessarily, as we still supply U.S. News with our data. Our concern, and most colleges' concern, is that reputational portion of the survey, which is not much more than a popularity contest, in our opinion."

Huus said the idea of having to rank the quality of education of other colleges is not a fair way of showing each school's educational standards.

"Most folks agree that at most, we can know a couple of institutions well — the one we attended maybe, certainly the one we're currently employed by and maybe two or three others — but there is no way that presidents, academic deans and chief admissions officers can intimately know the education quality at 400 institutions," Huus said. "For most of them we mostly were going, 'Not applicable, not applicable,' which [is] why we've given up on that part of the survey."

Huus said the presentation of information about class size and graduation rates for prospective students and parents is fine information to gather to help them understand how schools compare. But he said he thinks the rankings do not mean that the educational experience of a certain college is better than what they might find at a different place.

"I don't know that they've helped or that they've hurt us," Huus said. "Sweet Briar appears in the top tier according to U.S. News, but sort of at the bottom portion of that. … We see very few, if any, students who apply, come to visit and indicate that they found Sweet Briar because of our ranking on U.S. News."

Morin said Truman's number one ranking in its category as a public university has made parents and students take notice. However, she often warns prospective students to consider the fit of the college over its rank.

"Our high standing hasn't hurt us, but I do caution all students and parents who ask about it that rankings are just one tool that should be used when searching for the right fit college," Morin said. "Every college isn't right for every student and there are myriad factors that students should consider in making the college decision. The rankings could perhaps help them develop a list of possible schools but definitely shouldn't be the primary decision-making factor."

This was the case for sophomore Susan Szaradics. She said the rankings did not influence her final decision to come to Truman, rather, they helped narrow down the schools that she applied to.

"I looked at the ranking to choose where I wanted to apply to," Szaradics said. "I applied to five schools and got into all of them and visited all of them. Truman was the first school I got accepted into and it was the first I visited. I liked the atmosphere. … When I visited all of the other schools, I compared them to Truman."

WRITING | Truman seeks interest in proposed program

Continued from Page 1
would be able to take on creative writing as a second major. Riggle said the program is designed in a manner in which students will be able to pursue a double major, but it does not intend to allow students to major in both English and creative writing. There is too much overlap between the two degrees, she said.

English professor Joseph Benevento teaches creative writing at all levels and was part of the subcommittee that developed the proposal. Initially he was against the creation of the program because he didn't think Truman possessed the faculty to support it. In the past two years however, the English department has hired Dr. Obi Nwakanma and Dr. Jamie D'Agostino on the tenure-track. Once a faculty capable of handling the program was in place, Benevento said he became a supporter of the program.

Benevento said that as one of the senior creative writing instructors, he was asked to be part of the subcommittee. The formation of the subcommittee and BFA program is to give the students what they want, he said.

"Whenever high school kids who are considering Truman come to our visit days and they want to talk to an English professor, it seems at least half of the time they are asking about creative writing," Benevento said. "Also, many people who are English majors have at least a thought about doing some writing."

Benevento said there is already an emphasis on writing in place for students pursuing their BA in English, and that the BFA program is very similar. It simply is the next step for students who know they want to pursue creative writing early on. Benevento said the feasibility of the formation of the program was another reason it was pursued.

"In this economy, it's a new program, and it doesn't cost any additional money," Benevento said. "We have the faculty in place, and we just have to make some adjustments to courses already in place."

Sophomore Lindsay Smith said offering creative writing as a major would be a good idea for the University. Smith said concentrations within the English major often are too limited and usually only require an additional course or two. Smith also said it's extremely difficult to get into creative writing courses.

"As of right now, the classes fill up so fast during registration it's next to impossible to get in," Smith said. "Creative writing is something I would definitely consider picking up as a minor."

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Pershing Building has secured $10 million from the MOHELA fund. The University still must find additional funds for renovations to be completed.

MOHELA | Project for Pershing to continue in phases after Nixon grants partial funding

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those projects need to be ready to go, they need to be submitted to the proper agency or whomever is overseeing the dollars that you're trying to go after," Luetkemeyer said.

Budget director Dave Rector said the University will work through the department of higher education in seeking the remainder of the funding for Pershing Building.

"They've asked us about our priorities and we've said Pershing is our top priority, Baldwin is the next priority," he said. "If they have any little pieces of money for other things, we have some small projects."

Some of those smaller projects could include a replacement boiler in the University's powerplant, which Rector said is important because it would help the campus become more energy efficient. Rector said the University currently is waiting for more solid information regarding the stimulus package.

Rector said one of the reasons Truman was on the list of schools that received MOHELA funding after Nixon's review is that the project revolves around health sciences, which was the original focus of the MOHELA project. He also said that many of the other schools whose projects were put back online were far enough along that the governor decided they needed to be finished.

If all the original projects in Blunt's plan cleared for completion, the MOHELA fund would have come up more than $100 million short, according to the press release issued from Nixon's office. Projects approved by Nixon on Friday will leave just $266,888 in that fund after completion, according to the release.

Sam Minner, dean of the school of health sciences and education and chair of the Pershing Building advisory committee, said the first phase of the Pershing Building project will be the addition of a new three-story wing connected to the current building by both a tunnel and a glass sky-walkway. He said the first floor will contain athletic training and health and exercise science labs. The second floor will house the communications disorders clinic and faculty offices and the third floor will be occupied by the nursing department.

The second phase of the project, for which the funding is not yet secured, would involve gutting the three floors in the front of Pershing Building and then building new offices for coaches, faculty and staff.

"Everyone remains very optimistic that we're going to get the funding either from the stimulus package … and/or some contributions from the state directly," Minner said.

Minner said that once the state receives its share of President Obama's stimulus package, the governor and legislature will begin to sort it out. The University then could receive information soon after, he said.

"We're ready to go," he said. "We could begin very, very quickly."

University planner Mark Schultz, who met Tuesday with the architects hired for the Pershing Building renovations, said the project will be broken into two large bid packages that contain several smaller phases. Even though funding currently is only available for the first bid package, Schultz said they will likely be bid together to avoid the possibility that two general contractors could be working on the project.

Schultz said the first bid package would be the addition to the east side of Pershing Building and an alternate for that bid package would be a multipurpose space on the west elevation of the building. The second bid package would be the interior renovations of Pershing — including offices, classrooms, weightlifting rooms, locker rooms and the performance gym — with an alternate to that bid that would add air conditioning system to the performance gym.

"We are at 60 percent completion for the bid documents, so we have a fair amount of work yet to complete," Schultz said.

The earliest possible bid date currently stands at June 25, but Schultz said he hopes to push that date forward. He said the project should take two years to complete, and the goal is to break ground before July.

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