

Rejecting stimulus money does country no good



Kelsey Landhuis

"Fix it, fix it, fix it!" That was the advice Saturday Night Live's fictional financial expert Oscar Rogers gave regarding the economic crisis back in October. When pressed for details about exactly how the economy should be repaired, Rogers was at a loss. "Identify the problem," he said. "Fix it! Identify another problem. Fix it! Repeat as necessary until it's all fixed!" The shock of bank collapses and wild stock market swings has worn off

for the most part, leaving in its place a resigned acceptance of the nation's sorry economic state. Even the words "economic crisis" don't carry the same apocalyptic connotation they once did. The sense of urgency and national unity are gone, replaced by complacency and political bickering.

"It's been fixed!" Rogers exclaimed after Congress approved the economic stimulus package.

His optimism might be premature as the nation still faces serious financial difficulties. Even real financial experts cannot offer much better advice than, "Fix it!" The federal government is trying to do just that. But the small, vocal group of governors who want to refuse some, or all, of the federal dollars headed to their states are sending the wrong message to the rest of the country. Rejecting stimulus funds implies that

the economic situation isn't so bad. It's like the governors are saying, "We're fine on our own, thank you very much — we don't need your stinking money."

But they do, in fact, need the federal government's stinking money. The recession is much worse than most people care to let on. In a Feb. 19 column for the New York Times, Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, asked the question, "Who will stop the pain?" His answer was, in short, "I don't know." The Great Depression and Japan's decade-long recession ended because of events that were undesirable (World War II) or impossible to replicate (a massive rise in exports — hard to accomplish when the rest of the world's in a slump, too).

"[G]iven time, the current slump will end itself, the way slumps did in the 19th century," Krugman wrote,

using the recession following the Panic of 1893 as an example. But he pointed out that recession lasted more than five years, and three years later, another recession hit.

Federal and state governments must continue to take real, tangible steps to ease financial pain in the short term while planning for the long term.

Creating and enacting legislation of this magnitude requires a nonpartisan attitude. The Republican governors who oppose the stimulus simply are following the lead of Republicans in Congress — only three out of 219 voted in favor of the plan. Maybe they're right to question the stimulus — \$787 billion is a whole lotta money, and someone's going to have to pay it back eventually.

But the majority of the governors who oppose the plan will accept most of the money from it, which means they

probably really don't care about the financial burden for future generations, and their opposition merely is a political gesture intended to humor constituents and attract voters.

The middle of an economic crisis is not the time for political games. Federal and state government officials — Republicans and Democrats — need to set partisanship aside and find ways to ease the recession's effect on ordinary citizens. Maybe the stimulus will work. Maybe it won't. It certainly won't magically repair the economy overnight. Other programs and policies need to be put in place, and the road to economic recovery will be much longer if political leaders continue to engage in pointless fights instead of working together.

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



Got a rant? E-mail us at trurants@gmail.com

"My senior seminar isn't preparing me for graduation at all."



"I hate it when people use the word fail as a noun."

Tru Rants

Starting next week, Index readers get to sound off about what's on their mind. Keep it under 40 words and no personal attacks or profanity, please!

"I breed prize-winning clams as a hobby."



"If I hear about Nietzsche one more time, I might go crazy."



"I wish I got more sleep."

"I'm ready for summer, Kirksville — no more snow, please!"



"Spring break should be longer than a week."



"Looking at pictures of pandas is my favorite form of therapy."

Campus seeks green solution



Tyler Retherford

Although my college fund and post-university job opportunities might look bleak in light of the current economic turmoil, the environment might be getting a slight reprieve.

No, I'm not alluding to reduced fossil fuel use if none of us can afford to buy cars — I'm actually talking about printing costs. A couple new initiatives advocated by Student Senate's campus environment committee and implemented by ITS are aimed at both reducing our impact on the environment and our wallets. Violette Hall's computer lab now allows double-sided printing, and ITS is encouraging students to download and use a special environmentally friendly font. Although neither of these measures by itself is going to single-handedly save the environment, or even significantly increase the sustainability of the University, they're still a move in the right direction, fiscally and environmentally.

Universities, by their very nature, require the use of inordinate amounts of paper. Every semester students buy thousands of pages in textbooks, print dozens of pages of papers, fill up whole notebooks with notes and accumulate stacks of printed handouts and photocopied articles. Any changes to completely do without this kind of paper use would have to be drastic, and would, if rapidly implemented, probably reduce the quality of the education process itself for a short period while classes adjust to their new format. However, smaller, less radical changes to the way our classes are taught and the way we utilize technology in them can not only reduce waste and cut costs, but also make us think about the way we go about using resources in our classes. Preparing for possible budget cuts, the University is looking into ways to save money. These possibilities also have environmental advantages. The changes to printing are just the most recent example of this: The University is saving money on ink and paper while simultaneously reducing waste.

Perhaps just as important is the way changes like these encourage us to really think about the ways we use resources in our daily lives. I hadn't really considered how much paper I use and discard in a regular day of classes until I heard

about these waste-reducing changes. Similarly, the upcoming Earth Hour on March 28, which encourages people across the world to go without lights for an hour, helps make us aware of just how much electricity we use without giving it a thought. This especially is true in cases when we rarely think about having lights on, like living in residence halls and taking classes in buildings where lights are on continuously for the majority of the day without students having to decide when they're necessary and when we could go without them. Having to carry my garbage down the hall to the nearest recycling bins and trash cans also has made me more conscious of just how much material I go through each week, especially food packaging from the C-store or wrappers from snack foods.

Although these initiatives might not be directly fighting climate change, they are still important. They help save some resources, they help the University save a little money without having to actually sacrifice anything but a little bit of convenience and they help make us aware of the decisions we make each day that affect the environment.

Tyler Retherford is a sophomore anthropology major from Springfield, Mo.

Campus services need to offer more convenient hours



Molly Skyles

It's 2 a.m., my roommate is asleep, and I have not begun studying for my biology exam in seven hours. Where do I go? Of course the residence hall lounge always is an option, but there's that weird kid snoring in there again. Library? Nope, it closed an hour ago. Hallway? Sadly, I guess so.

Our campus often is entirely inconvenient. The hours of everything — the library, Mainstreet Market in the Student Union Building and the Student Recreation Center — can be a nuisance.

Back to my library dilemma, not only is the library only open until 1 a.m. Sundays

After all, Wal-Mart and McDonald's are open 24 hours, so why not the library or the rec center?

through Thursdays, but its weekend hours also are ridiculously untimely. The library seems to assume students are out partying all weekend, so why bother staying open? Honestly now, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Sundays is unreasonable. I don't know about you, but I have spent a few Saturday nights hard at work instead of at a party and Sunday mornings also can be prime homework time. Relief might be on the way. According to a Feb. 5 article in the Index, there is a proposal underway to keep the library open 24 hours. If this does happen, many students likely will take advantage of the extra hours — or at least I will.

Speaking of inconvenient hours, what about Mainstreet Market? There have been many Saturday afternoons when I either slept too late or just was tired of the cafeteria and wanted a Blimpie sandwich or a burger from the Sky Ranch Grill. But guess what? Mainstreet

Market is closed Saturdays. I found out this bit of info the hard way when I walked all the way across campus in the rain one Saturday afternoon only to learn that Mainstreet Market was closed. I walked back to my room, annoyed and wet.

There's no better way to unwind after a long day of studying or to get revved up for the next week than a good work out at the rec center. But be sure to check your watch — it closes at 7 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Sunday nights especially are when I would love to hit the gym. I just have spent the entire day studying, and the caffeine I'm running on is getting low. I need endorphins from an intense workout to get me motivated again. I mean, I guess I could go run up and down the stairs a few times, but what's the fun in that? A girl needs her elliptical machines.

An obvious response to this complaint is that no one wants to work at the library for 24 hours or spend Saturday night swiping people into the rec center. I don't blame them entirely, but most of these workers

are students. So, hire more poor college kids and alternate who gets stuck with the early morning and late night shifts. I'm sure there are many students who would be grateful to have a job that they would suck it up and work through the night from time to time.

The possibility of extending the hours of various places on campus should be further investigated. Some of us are up all night while other wake at the crack of dawn, and campus facilities should be accommodating of that fact. After all, Wal-Mart and the McDonald's drive-thru are both open 24 hours so why not the library or the rec center?

Molly Skyles is a freshman communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

Eating disorders can affect men



Jackie Gonzalez

This week is Eating Disorders Awareness Week. Coordinated by Alpha Sigma Gamma each year, the week appears to be well received by both faculty and students. The point is clear: "Measure your heart, not your waist." Just like every other female-oriented campaign, the week is geared toward redefining beauty.

Wait, did I say female-oriented? Unfortunately, yes.

I walked by an event table Monday to find a display covered with almost-bare models. As I briefly scanned the images, I only accounted for pictures of female models, not any men.

Two days later, I visited a local hair salon in order to help donate money to the cause.

Salons. Women's magazines. Free smoothies. It got me thinking, "Where my fellas at?"

Although I see the value in promoting awareness and prevention, I can't

get past the fact that the rhetoric of this event (in addition to many others globally) seems to be geared toward women. While women appear to be affected by eating disorders much more than men, there are plenty of men in the world who might not even realize they have a problem.

Male eating disorders have been on the rise for years. A recent Harvard study claimed that 25 percent of people with anorexia or bulimia are men. That said, these are just men who actually admit to having a disorder. There could be millions more affected by it who are in denial, just as many women are.

Many male athletes unknowingly engage in eating disorders on a regular basis. I have male friends back home who are college athletes constantly forced to obsess about their weight, losing and gaining weight on demand. I know rowers and wrestlers who stop eating for days and live off of Cayenne pepper and lemon juice, convinced it helps their performance. I don't doubt that some male athletes at Truman adopt unhealthy lifestyles for the sake of the game.

It's common to hear of this self-inflicted male abuse, yet it hardly gets considered as a "disorder." Realistically, men are just as concerned

about their bodies as women, if not more. Since masculinity is directly associated with rock-hard abs or bulging biceps, men easily can become consumed with the idea that to be respected, they must have the stereotypical look of an alpha-male. Although women sometimes focus on certain physical attributes as shallow signifiers of beauty, it seems like men must maintain particular physical attributes for the sake of preserving their manhood.

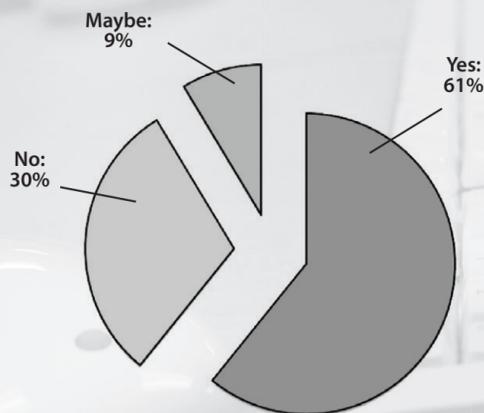
Male celebrities like Billy Bob Thornton, Dennis Quaid and Elton John have admitted to developing disorders in an effort to get jobs and stay in the spotlight. It is interesting to realize that despite men finally acknowledging that they too can fall victim to this disorder, we still seldom hear about it in classes or the news.

By creating programming and fundraising options that attract predominately women, we could be preventing men from recognizing their own problems and seeking help. I in no way discount the movement as is, but it is important to consider reaching out to the minority in this case — men.

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

WEB POLL

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This week's question:

What are you planning to do during summer break?

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