

OUR VIEW

MOHELA hold-up lacking in explanation

Oh MOHELA — we love it, we hate it, but mostly we're just baffled by it. During the past three years MOHELA has been manipulated, audited, sold in bits and pieces and mostly just reduced to a topic of debate and unrest among politicians, and now it looks like it might have all been for naught.

We must admit that we were a bit skeptical when we first heard about Gov. Matt Blunt's Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative back in 2006. In a series of visits around the state, Blunt announced funding for capital improvement projects at public colleges and universities. The bill for these projects, covered by the sale of MOHELA assets, was to total \$350 million.

As one of the largest student loan secondary markets in the U.S., MOHELA has helped students get an education without carrying around heavy debt and impossible loan payments. No doubt it did its job well, until reporting a profit loss of \$12.4 million in the first quarter of 2008 — its first loss since it was created in 1981.

After Blunt's initial announcement, students who had a vested interest in MOHELA's well-being began to show legitimate concern about future loan payments and still others saw an opportunity for a well-worn corner of Truman to receive a much-needed face lift.

\$350 million seemed like one heck of a large chunk of money, and immediately students whose loans had been serviced by MOHELA wondered what the effect would be. It was difficult to understand how this money could just appear for colleges and universities without any repercussions for loan-holders. The media asked, and although Blunt issued statements, we remained uneasy. We're still wondering about those effects, which is a frightening thought because those of us who were freshmen when the plan was announced are about to graduate and face loan repayment.

Now, three years later, the on-again, off-again relationship between MOHELA and Truman is back to

off-again — or at least maybe off-again. We could have broken ground in a mere 90 days had we maintained the green light, but instead Truman now finds itself on the list of maybes. We suppose it's better than the list of no's, but even better would be to be on the list of all-readys. Yes, that's right — some schools already have completed their MOHELA projects. Others, like us, have received significant amounts of money toward their projects — nearly \$1 million significant in our case.

Except for the private letters sent to the presidents of the public colleges and universities throughout the state that were scheduled to receive MOHELA help for capital improvements, no details about the postponements and cancellations enacted by Gov. Jay Nixon are readily available. For a governor who so heartily encouraged openness in government as the state's Attorney General, it seems odd that more information hasn't been released explaining this decision. The governor already has thrown his support behind higher education by recommending a level budget in 2010, so we don't question where we fall on his list of priorities. However, when it comes to such necessary improvements as those expected in Pershing, we just want some answers so we can know what to expect — both personally when it comes to loans and as an institution when it comes to buildings.

We understand that the economy is not good, and that we can't complain about a lack of or even a redistribution of funds in times like these. According to Truman officials, MOHELA just isn't making the expected profits because of factors like the current financial crisis, and changes in the federal loan reimbursement structure.

For now, it looks like our saving grace might have to be a chunk of federal stimulus money. If that really is the case, we hope this is the end of the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative roller coaster.

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 ERIN NEUMAN



Letter to the Editor

Column simplifies SAB and budget woes

We were surprised to read Jackie Gonzalez's column in the Jan. 29 issue of the Index. Her complete lack of research and understanding of the value of on-campus entertainment was saddening. One example would be the Student Union Building-sponsored ice rink held in the Georgian Rooms.

The Student Activities Board co-sponsored the event, assisted with publicity and volunteered to run the event, but the principle funding came from the SUB After Dark budget. This specific event was planned and budgeted long before the budget cuts were enacted, and judging by the positive campus response, it seems like it will be hugely successful. In a town the size of Kirksville, on-campus events are essential in attracting potential students

to an otherwise quiet community. These events also give students safer alternatives to potentially dangerous off-campus weekend events. Truman already faces depressed enrollment rates, and we need to emphasize the social aspect of campus as well as the academic aspect.

Courtney Robbins
Lauren Nettles
Seniors

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Serving the University community since 1909

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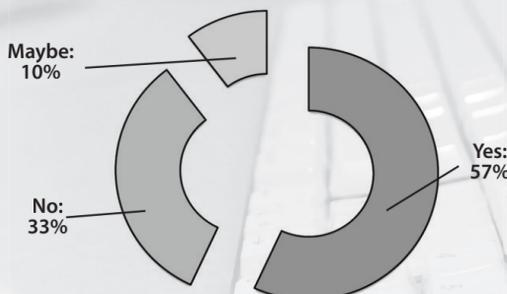
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WEB POLL

Are you going to watch the Super Bowl?



This week's question:

Are your spring break plans being affected by the economy?

Vote online at trumanindex.com

What was going on in the

INDEX?

10 years ago – Feb. 5, 1999

Laptops and other computer accessories intended for student use were stolen from Violette Hall between Jan. 22 and Jan. 26.

20 years ago – Feb. 2, 1989

Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity faced disciplinary action when an underage visiting student was rushed to the hospital after drinking alcohol at a TKE barn party.

30 years ago – Feb. 1, 1979

The National League for Nursing granted full accreditation to the University's nursing school.