

OUR VIEW

Budget crisis demands more student activism

Gov. Jay Nixon gave his State of the State address Tuesday night, speaking about the importance of maintaining an affordable education at Missouri public universities and reiterating his proposal to keep the cost of tuition steady.

Last week, our University went from the lowest of lows to the highest of highs after hearing Nixon's budget cuts and recommending "level funding." After the e-mail announcement Interim University President Darrell Krueger sent outlining Nixon's plan, an almost audible sigh of relief could be heard throughout campus. Students returned to business as usual and the spirit of unity that had gripped our campus dissipated. Unfortunately, our return to business as usual was somewhat premature.

Too many in the campus community have lost sight of the fact that Nixon's level funding proposal is still not set in stone. Although Nixon recommends trying to maintain current education costs, we need to remember that Missouri is a democracy, not a dictatorship. What Nixon says doesn't necessarily go. For the University's dream of no budget cuts to actually happen, the Missouri General Assembly needs to agree with Nixon that keeping public universities affordable is of prime importance to Missouri's citizens. If they don't, Nixon's proposal could go up in smoke, and the Truman student body along with the rest of Missouri public university students will pay the price — literally.

But not all is lost. The unified spirit gripping the campus still can be put to good use. The General Assembly represents us — students and citizens — and Truman's student body could make its voice known to its representatives. By making our concerns known, the student body

can make its voice heard. The first step: Stay informed. Students should be "active listeners" to borrow that favorite phrase of first-grade teachers.

Relying on Krueger's e-mails won't cut it. Stay engaged in the budget cut debate by reading news stories and keep on top of what's going on. Write letters to your state senators, call your representatives, participate in Storm the Capitol. Often, students think their voices can't be heard and the majority of campus is in the dark when it comes time to talk about issues that are important to the University's community. Follow the example of students who are deeply involved and become invested in the fate of the University. Choose to participate actively, so you can actually make a difference. If you don't, you still are affected by the fate of the University (after all, we are all students here) but you won't have done the important work necessary to maintain the Truman experience. Truman students must make their needs known in Jefferson City, otherwise we won't have done our University justice.

Participating in round table discussions on the budget (like the one scheduled for 6 to 8 p.m. tonight in the Student Union Building Activities Room) and lobbying in Jefferson City might not seem like the most thrilling way to spend your free time, but they are important. And the budget might not seem like the most pressing concern for students, but it will affect everyone if staff positions are cut or extra fees are imposed next year. Even if the level funding proposal passes, the University will be facing more than a \$1 million shortfall next year. Do your research Truman students — you don't attend the Harvard of the Midwest for nothing.

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.

- In a jumpline on page 19 and a teaser on page 1 of the Jan. 22 issue of the Index, junior Loyde Braidlow was incorrectly identified as a former All American rather than a national qualifier.

CARTOON

BY ERIN NEUMAN



Letters to the Editor

University board needs to make sacrifices

Regardless of the hoped-for tuition hike relief from Governor Jay Nixon and foreboding expressions from Interim University President Darrell Krueger that 124 rumored staff layoffs might still be needed after state budget severances, Truman and community supporters are all being told by President Krueger and his Board of Governors backers that we all have to make sacrifices — as he repeated on KTVO TV interviews, twice now.

For sure, a \$30,000 student hardship fund donation has been, magnificently vouchsafed personally by the same beneficent rich person. But characteristically no real thought seems to have been granted us in all shortsightedness, which always has been a feature of the non-Dixon Warren old NMSU/TSU guard to a 2009 equality of sacrifice from their non-teacher, administrator selves. Even though any perusal of the U.S. chronicle of higher education shows such prerequisites as are now being correctly queried by most public education backers in the U.S., like myself.

Here at Truman is it economic and affordable for administrators and the corporate male governors' board to maintain at least three programs over-expensively in sheer fat at a 'told-you' moment of austerity? Since good professors have successfully and more cheaply fought and kept study abroad programs with richer and larger campuses overseas, why is Truman still running its own Study Abroad Office in an underused building with a head who is actually paid to be a French professor? Similarly, why a free house outside of distant Jefferson City for any president when even in today's depressed housing market, a prudent sell-off would net at least \$100,000 for most instructors?

There is a case for real sacrifice by the Truman administrators to be debated in 2009.

Larry Iles
Kirksville Resident

Pirates feature makes light of serious issue

I am writing in regard to the article on pirates that appeared on the front page of the "TruLife" section in the Jan. 22 issue of the Index. I found this article quite objectionable because of its combining a discussion of the Somali pirate crisis with a discussion of the

emergence of pirates in pop culture. Such a connection is tenuous at best and highly inappropriate. The situation in the waters near East Africa is of international importance, but by merely mentioning the "Pirates of the Caribbean" franchise in the same article, its significance is downplayed. For an article about the Somali pirates to be even appearing in a features/entertainment section is rather frivolous, and I am dismayed. For shame, Index, what happened to your collective critical thinking skills? No reasonable person should have let this story run.

Chris Boning
Junior

Abortion flag columns are old news

It's not often that I read the Index for its originality, but sometimes, you've got to hand it to the Opinions section. The double-feature of Zach Vicars and Andrew Kindiger from last week really was something to behold. Now, I should start off by saying that I don't care whether Vicars compared pro-choice folks to Nazis. After all, he admitted the comparison sickened him, so justice is done as long as he vomits along with us after reading his columns.

I also don't mind that Vicars missed the boat on the flag issue. They're not a "silent demonstration ... in direct response" to the Freedom of Choice Act. Maybe he didn't know, but those flag demonstrations have been going on for quite a while. They're a response to the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The Freedom of Choice Act merely is an attempt to codify that Supreme Court decision, which has been and will be with us for a good long while. Facts always have been stubborn things for certain columnists, but, again, I don't mind that so much.

What I do mind is that nearly half of a page of valuable newsprint was wasted on a topic that has been beaten to death over the years, both outside the Opinions section and within it. Kelsey Landhuis, current Index managing editor knows this best. She wrote a column less than one year before about this exact — and I mean exact — same issue. Just search for "Anti-abortion flag campaign falls on deaf ears" on the Index Web site. Landhuis' column wasn't a particularly jaunty read, but reading rehashed and tired arguments makes me want to jab little blue flags in my eyes to keep myself awake. I'm bored of irrelevant, canned arguments

that aren't worth the paper they're printed on, Index, and so are a lot of other folks.

Now, maybe Kirksville and Truman have run out of interesting controversies. Maybe the Index has run out of bold, imaginative writers. Maybe both, but I doubt it. After all, isn't there a state budget crisis going on that deserves some analysis? What about an opinion about whether it's too difficult to re-charter a fraternity, or any group, after a suspension? How about the need to formally educate Truman students on the dangers of potential predators among them (see "Student charged with sex crime," Jan. 22 issue of the Index) or on the continually abysmal lack of security at the University? Maybe even a column about the need for Truman to focus on enrollment among transfer and out-of-state students?

Oh, never mind. It's just easier to blather about FOCA and Nazis. Wait until next year, though. Heavens to Betsy the Index will print a whopper of a column about little flags and timeless abortion protests. Good luck with that, Index. If you need me or any other readers, we'll be the ones with the little flags sticking out of our eyes.

Daniel Glossenger
Alumnus

Department head addition is success

It now has been more than one and a half years since Truman adopted a new administrative structure. The transformation certainly was not without problems and concerns, and most of my colleagues have strong opinions about how the change was done. I've heard suggestions that the changes should have been made years (even decades) ago, while others feel they should not have been made at all. Some suggest that the changes have saved us some money while others account for things a different way and believe that we now are devoting more resources to pay administrators to manage and lead the institution.

I have my own opinions about all this, but one thing I know for certain: The individuals who showed such great dedication to Truman by agreeing to serve as department chairs have brought new energy, new ideas and a new sense of collaboration to Truman made this place better already.

Sam Mimmer
Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Education

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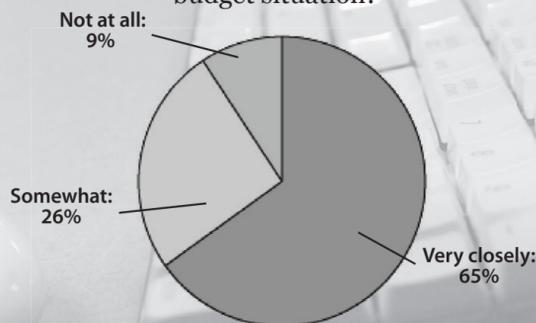
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