

Kirkville opportunities show size doesn't matter



Zach Vicars

As I write this column, I'm sitting aboard a cramped Boeing 757 on my way back from a two-week honeymoon on the pristine island of Kauai. My new wife and I swam with sea turtles, kayaked alluring rivers and hiked through untouched jungle. It's funny, though, right now all I can think about is coming back to reality. I find I'm itching for the precious little dot on the map that I now call home: Kirkville, Mo.

Although some students, especially Truman Week newcomers, might be dreading life in the slow lane, I can't wait to get back to it.

Most incoming freshmen come to Truman excited for the academic rigor, small class size and broad range of student activities but dreading the subdued nightlife that Kirkville has to offer.

As a second-year student who decided to become a permanent Kirkville resident, I feel obliged to assuage those fears. If students have open minds and a little bit of added energy, they'll find that Kirkville provides plenty of off-campus activity while serving as an excellent place to learn.

Don't be fooled, this place

is nothing like the fashionable suburbs or posh cities that new students might know and love. Students won't have their entertainment handed to them, nor will they be able to spend their way into a good time.

Kirkville doesn't operate on dollar signs. It's not a simple machine that sucks in money and spits out cheap thrills.

It's a humble place to live, with state parks instead of amusement parks and farmers markets instead of Whole Foods Markets.

We have train bridges where students spend their evenings instead of night clubs, and quirky art fairs instead of art museums.

Sadly, our ski lodges are broken down and graffiti-ridden, without working lifts and hot cocoa.

There are some activities here that you'll find everywhere else. Every night of the week, as many freshmen already know, students can find a place to get trashed out of their minds. There are hundreds of parties each month that offer promiscuity and irresponsibility, but the Kirkville I've come to know and love offers so much more than that. It demands a little bit of creativity but provides opportunities to build relationships and create memories.

The student who comes to Kirkville looking to fill every spare second with activity misses the point. I'd like to invite new students to simply enjoy the atmosphere of Kirkville. Truman is nestled in what is truly a great Midwestern town. The

people here are some of the best you'll find. Dozens of restaurants offer the same food you'll find back home, but for quite a bit less. The streets are quiet and the traffic is all but non-existent. Crime is blissfully low, so screen doors stay unlocked here. Where the town and the campus mix, in off-campus housing and apartments, you'll find all sorts of people, from good old farm boys to those steeped in culture and academia.

Kirkville truly is a crossroads: Where hard work meets an open mind. Get out there. Live it. Enjoy it.

Zach Vicars is a sophomore physics major from Saint Louis, Mo.

College life shaped by change



Alex Boles

God created the Earth and everything in it in six days, right? My apologies, but Truman Week is only five days this year, so you have one less day than Him to create your figurative college world and everything in it. So get to work. I could probably make the Biblical 10 Commandments work within the transition process from high school to college – especially the "honor thy neighbor" one but what's the fun in that when I could just make up my own commandments based on my three years of experience?

I wish someone would have told me to toughen up and that college is not high school. There is so much more involved with coming to college than the parties you most likely will go to this week. It's a time to release your leftover childhood adventure-loving self. The transition from high school to college can be a rough process. But trust me, and honor these 10 commandments of Adjustment to College and you'll find yourself resting on the sixth day.

1. Thou shall put sleep above all else. Return to kindergarten and incorporate nap and snack time into your routine. Don't be afraid to take a lazy day.

2. Thou shall make Wal-Mart your second home. You'll want to stack up on the essentials (Easy Mac and Ramen noodles). Bored at 2 a.m.? What better time to go to Wal-Mart?

3. Thou shall put effort into making college a home. Instead of sitting in your room missing mom's home cooking, ask your neighbors to go stargazing at the train bridge or play Apples to Apples as a house in the lounge.

4. Thou shall wear sweatpants to class. What's the point in waking up at 5 a.m. for a 7:30 a.m. class when everyone else will be in their

pis? Everyday is not a fashion show.

5. Thou shall leave the excuses at the door. The excuses you tried on your teachers back home won't work on most professors. Unless you're bleeding profusely, go to class.

6. Thou shall always leave your door open. I cannot stress enough how many friends I met and have kept throughout the years from leaving my door open and welcoming visitors. It might be hard, but it's refreshing to go outside your comfort zone.

7. Thou shall mooch off your parents as much as possible. Yeah, you're finally free from the constant nagging to do the dishes, walk the dog and clean your room, but they're still good for a buck or two.

8. Thou shall only do laundry when necessary. Wear jeans twice and live in the same hoodie for a week. Also, refer to commandment No. 7 — go home to visit mom and dad and have your laundry done for free.

9. Thou shall honor thy roommate with roommate contracts. Talk about all the gritty details, even if it feels uncomfortable. You both are probably on cloud nine right now and think you'll never argue, but a semester can be a long, stressful time.

10. Thou shall take this time to figure yourself out. People fall into the ways of the cliques in high school. Everyone dresses the same, talks the same and constantly strives to follow the crowd. Stop. Develop your individuality, take a yoga class and become more aware of who you want to be.

Most of you probably walked in wide-eyed and vowed not to cry when Mom and Dad said their goodbyes. You thought this college thing would be a piece of cake, right?

Wrong. Surviving the transition takes effort, change and stepping outside your comfort zone. So put some effort into shaping your college world, and do it in a way where you can be pleased with what you see.

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Tru Rants

Index readers get to sound off about what's on their minds.

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

"I wish I could walk into the library with a coffee instead of sneaking it in and drinking it under the table!"

"Is Joe Baldwin trying to make a political statement? He ALWAYS faces towards Arkansas!"

Off-campus living provides relief from on-campus woes



Molly Skyles

Aug. 22, 2009: freshmen move-in day. Crying parents, welcoming student advisers and overwhelmed-but-excited students are overflowing in the residence halls. Just one year ago I experienced move-in day. I was completely independent and thrilled about living in the residence halls, or so I thought.

Now, as I begin my second year at college, I'm excited to be moving in once again. However, this time around things are a bit different. I'm moving in to a house off campus.

Off-campus living comes with a lot of new responsibilities and independence, that don't come with residence hall living.

Last year at about this time, the residence halls were everything I could have imagined and more. I liked the idea of being sur-

rounded by complete strangers and getting to meet all kinds of new people. Everything was new and intriguing, and I wouldn't trade that experience for anything. However, if I had to put up with one more semester in those residence halls I might go crazy. Between the weirdo neighbors, ridiculous rules and that awful food, who wouldn't lose their mind?

My residence hall last year was by no means horrible. Most of my really good friends ended up living in my hall. But there also were some people I hope to never see again. I was the typical freshman. I didn't know many people, so I clung to those who lived around me just so I would have someone to sit by or walk around campus with. Things were going really well.

Then I actually got to know them and realized it just didn't work. But not only were we not BFFs, we really didn't get along at all. So by living in a residence hall I made some great friends but also some frenemies.

As I said before, I didn't like the residence hall rules. It was no prison, but it also wasn't the

complete freedom I had hoped for. There were quiet hours to observe, house meetings to attend, and fees to pay if you stepped one toe out of line. There is so much more freedom in a house with a distant landlord.

Finding a way to eat is possibly the worst part about living away from home. Living on campus, you are provided with a meal plan, which sounds great. You have all kinds of food at your reach whenever you choose. However, the cafeteria food is far from Mom's home cooking. I don't know how many times I consumed some type of sketchy meat without being entirely sure what it was. I once ate something called a crusty dog. It had a bad name, awful taste and horrific stomach effects later that night.

I realize that I'm complaining a lot, but I'm just ready to move on and take on new challenges and responsibilities. But the food will remain one thing I continue to complain about, and I think that's allowed.

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

Database exposes scholarship jobs



Tyler Retherford

As much as I sometimes complain to my friends at other schools about having to work a scholarship job to keep my academic scholarships, the scholarship job program is clever. Without many graduate students around, the scholarship job system ensures professors have student aides if they need them and department offices can get some much-needed help. At the same time, the University saves money because it doesn't have to hire as many people for positions lightly trained students can fill.

Looking at the big picture, the system works pretty well. However, the system is less well implemented when it comes to making sure individual students know how the program works and get access to the kinds of jobs that would help them most.

Most professors are extremely

helpful in pointing students toward jobs, but if you're looking for something in the community or outside your area of study, there hasn't been a good way to find a job aside from word of mouth. Until now.

The new Tru-Positions section of the University Web site is a much-needed and beneficial addition to the scholarship job experience. I suspect the point of the scholarship job program is to help students get non-classroom experience and maybe explore some job opportunities outside of the academic fields where they spend so much time. A searchable database that explains what the job is, who you're working with and what sort of skills you need makes finding a job not only achievable, but easy. And the system helps organizations from all over the Kirkville area as much as it helps students.

Tru-Positions gives non-University organizations an opportunity to draw more student help, which is the most exciting prospect of the new database. As I browsed the job posting to see how the database worked, I saw some interesting jobs, such as an opening for an instructor's assistant at Ray Miller Elemen-

tary School working with gifted students and a research position with the Adair County Historical Society. Before looking at the database, I didn't even realize these sorts of jobs qualified for scholarship hours. Many of these positions are valuable to students because they involve work in the same settings in which their post-college work will take place. They allow students to put into practice what they're learning in the classrooms. Equally important, better access to these types of scholarship jobs means that local organizations should be able to get more support from students, who will benefit not only from learning on the job, but also by getting the hours they need for scholarship renewal.

The database is rather bare at present, but as the school year starts up, those places needing a little more help should be able to get the students they need. And students will finally have a decent way to find jobs that not only get us our scholarship money, but also help us build skills and get the experience we need.

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