

Large departments should cut faculty first



Tyler Retherford

After what seems like an eternity following the discussion of budget shortages, it seems like there is one indisputable fact — the University will lose some professors. It's not a pleasant reality, but at this point it seems inevitable. Consequently, it is time people start thinking about how these cuts are going to be managed and how we are going to evaluate which faculty to keep and which we can somehow find a way to manage without. If some recent debates about campus spending, such as

the implementation of the Perimeter Access System, have shown us anything, it is that students and other concerned parties cannot just wait for ideas to be implemented before we speak up about the way decisions are being made or it will be too late.

Decisions about faculty cuts are going to be difficult, and of course no one will want to see their own departments downsized. Rather than looking at which specific professors or departments should bear the brunt of cuts, I think the best way to start this process is to decide what our priorities are as a university.

One of Truman's biggest strengths is its liberal arts focus, and that means keeping a wide range of programs. When I talk to family and friends back home about Truman, the programs they know and have heard positive things about tend to be relatively

small ones, like communication disorders and the MAE program. For many of these smaller departments, any cuts at all jeopardize their effectiveness in teaching students everything they need for their major.

Consequently, I believe the best targets for faculty cuts are the larger departments that can compensate for fewer faculty members simply by increasing some class sizes. This is not exactly desirable, especially as small class sizes are part of Truman's appeal, but large classes are better than having to cut all electives from a certain major, which is what seems to be happening with the theater department. This must, of course, be balanced with maintaining an array of faculty with specialization in any relevant areas. Saying biology is the best area to cut professors simply because it is a large department ignores the fact that

it needs some professors who are qualified to teach genetics, botany and so on.

Faculty cuts should also be directed at eliminating positions that are covering specialties other faculty members are qualified to teach or positions that are specialized in areas that are not essential to the major. If the department can manage without them by offering a few courses less frequently or at a higher number of students per section, then that would be the preferable place to make cuts. Many smaller departments already operate this way, offering some courses only once every few years, or in some cases, even only once per graduating class.

This strategy also would be easier to recover from, should our funding come back to the level it has been in previous years. Rebuilding an entire department once we have enough funding to rehire

some professors is simply untenable. Hiring a few more professors to broaden the scope of classes offered within a major or having more sections of certain classes is far more manageable.

Although I think this would be the best strategy for deciding how to make cuts, the important thing is that students and faculty voice their opinion about how we make this important decision rather than wait for the decisions to be made and then complain about it afterward. If you feel strongly about the way these cuts are likely to be made, then write some letters and talk to your department chairs, deans and other people who likely will play a role in the process.

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Holiday justice worth fighting for



Zach Vicars

A couple of weeks ago as I was driving through town I saw a store awning that boldly proclaimed: "WE'RE OPEN ON THANKSGIVING!" Right then, I made a mental note to never shop at that store again.

You see, most of the time, I'd call myself a capitalist. I believe in healthy competition among businesses. I find that the government harms more than it helps and I think everyone deserves at least a chance at wealth. But this whole we-stay-open-on-the-holidays business just doesn't sit well with me. It might be one of capitalism's greatest faults.

Seriously, it's just wrong that businesses can't give all their employees a few days off during the year. Time with one's family on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and (less seasonally) the Fourth of July ought to be a Constitutional right. Even in this shaky economy, I don't think Christmas Day sales are going to make the difference between exorbitant surplus and a bounced check. From a humanitarian standpoint, no one should be forced to leave their children, presents and turkey dinner to go check out a few last-minute shoppers on Christmas Eve.

Now I'm not entirely naive. I know there are many employees who work on holidays not because their bosses demand it, but because of their own financial hardship. Believe me, I've been there. I spent this Fourth of July pulling soggy insulation from underneath a mobile home. Money will make you do some crazy things. Even so, in the spirit of goodwill, Christmas bonuses should take the place of compromising work schedules.

But let's not kid ourselves. We know the Mr. Potters of this world aren't going to give their employees time off, no matter how worthy the reason might be. And bonuses? Well that's out of the question! For many Scrooge-esque proprietors, profit will always win over people.

Still, all hope is not lost. As consumers, we can and must use the flawed economic system to our advantage. Let's fight capitalistic exploitation with some capitalistic

exploitation of our own. This is my homework for you during Winter Break:

1. Get your Christmas shopping done on time.
2. Make sure to procure any holiday feast needs by the 23rd at the very latest.
3. No matter what you do, don't step foot in a department store on Christmas Eve or Christmas. And we'll throw in New Year's, to boot.

If you're really eager to seek out holiday justice for the working individual, there are more radical measures you can take. Boycott all stores that stay open on holidays. I have a close family member who has sworn off a nation-wide convenience store because it's always open on Christmas. Her choice might not affect the company's stance, but the choice of 10, 100 or even 1,000 individuals might. You could even take it a step further: Write a letter to the manager or corporate offices of a particular organization, explaining why you're no longer doing business with them. You'd be surprised what a stir a few provocative sentences can incite. Or, if you personally work for an unreasonable employer and you're really committed to the cause, quit your job. This response involves great personal sacrifice, but it also sends a profound message to the boss you'll be leaving (if you're a good employee, that is). Often, when an important team member is gone, corporations realize how valuable that person was and how foolhardy it was to ask too much of them.

Just be sure in your Christmas shopping this year to give the worthy employees of your favorite stores the time off they deserve. After all, in this economy, the customer is always right. No business owner who's worth his weight in cranberry sauce is going to keep his shop open without customers. He'd be a cooked goose to allow his workers' time-cards to tick away without any cash flowing through the registers.

But whether or not you choose to take any action against the established order it is my sincere hope that you all have a merry Christmas happy Chanukah, splendid Kwanzaa or just a good break. Cherish your family and friends, and never forget that we all have great reason to celebrate. See you in the next decade.

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AROUND THE QUAD

What's your favorite holiday song?



"The Little Drummer Boy."

*Margaret Loehnig
sophomore*



"Let it Snow."

*Michael Delcau
freshman*



"Santa Baby."

*Erica Hoth
junior*



"All I Want for Christmas is You, by Mariah Carey."

*Kyle Busch
senior*

New Year's resolutions encourage procrastination



Brenna McDermott

There is one day a year when we all vow to rid ourselves of fat, cigarettes, booze and shoplifting. For that one day, we collectively promise to be better children, better parents and better human beings.

If only we could keep those promises.

Inevitably the smell of leftover holiday pie wafts from the refrigerator, stress at work calls for a nicotine fix, too much family time must be drowned in vodka and that coat at the department store is just waiting to get picked up.

Our society has decided that New Year's Eve is the ultimate "clean slate" day. Wrongs are unwronged, flaws are forgotten and we are reborn into a new year. This "beginning" brings much thought and reflection on how we all can improve ourselves.

But why do we have to wait for Jan. 1? Why can't we vow to improve ourselves right now?

This idea that the beginning of the year is a magical time during

which we can plan to become better people is a messed-up view of our society.

There is no such thing as a clean slate. When the calendar turns to 2010, we don't lose all our years of life experience and evolution.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to improve our lives. That desire to improve is what makes humans successful, competitive and hard-working. But wanting to "start over" is a New Year's wish that can't be fulfilled. There is no starting over.

Isn't it better to learn from the past instead of wanting to forget it? We all make mistakes — we hurt the ones we love, we hurt ourselves, we hurt the Earth. But wanting nothing more than to forget our mistakes doesn't make us better human beings. Our past mistakes help us learn who we want to be and who we don't want to be. Learning from mistakes is essential to growth. There's a reason our years are cyclical. It's impossible for us to move forward and never look back. As Roman author and orator Marcus Tullius Cicero once said, "We must not say every mistake is a foolish one." Mistakes help us know what not to do. And if we're ever going to make resolutions that stick, we need to keep our past mistakes in mind.

My second beef with New Year's resolutions is that they

teach us as a culture that procrastination is the best way to change ourselves. As the adage goes, "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today." I say, never put off till January what you can resolve to do right now. Waiting to better ourselves because we think January magically will give us the endurance and dedication to change doesn't make any sense. By January, I'm tired, poor and getting back into the swing of school. It's not the best time to make big changes in my life. I've run out of initiative.

If we want to make changes in our lives, why can't we just make them today? Not tomorrow, not January, today. It might be difficult to make big life changes like diet, exercise or health resolutions today, but it's one step closer to accomplishing a goal.

This year, I'm not waiting until January to prioritize my life and take care of myself. We might be on the brink of finals, we might be under mounds of stress, but today is the day to resolve to make ourselves better people. Instead of waiting until 2010 to become better people, let's resolve to become better people today.

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Tiger Woods abuses hero and role model status



Shawn Shinneman

The phrase, "Get in the hole, Tiger!" will never sound the same.

By now, most of you know the story. Tiger Woods — the world's first billion-dollar athlete, my childhood sports hero and golf's greatest player now and ever — reportedly was caught cheating. His pathetic voicemail to alleged mistress Jamiee Grubbs of VH1's "Tool Academy" is so far the most damning evidence of alleged affairs with at least 10 women that have surfaced in the aftermath of his fishy, one-car accident outside

his Orlando home.

"Tool Academy" — seriously Tiger? The most influential sports figure of my lifetime is competing with the "Loud Mouth Tool" for women?

As a fan, I feel betrayed. This is the first time in my life I can say I am surprised and disappointed by the sexual promiscuity of a celebrity. Honestly, you could tell me Brad left Angelina to go back to Jennifer, is having an affair with Jessica, has three illegitimate children with Britney and throws down with Clooney's ex-wife when he's in the area. I wouldn't raise an eyebrow.

But Tiger was different. His style and grace on the course seemed to match his actions off of it. His humility made him the perfect role model for kids all over the world. The color of his skin broke down mental barriers

of who "should" or "shouldn't" play this amazing game. His utter domination of the sport surely has inspired thousands, if not millions, of youngsters to pick up a golf club.

For these reasons, I came to idolize Woods while growing up. For these reasons, hundreds of thousands of kids watch his every move, admiring and impersonating everything from the way he swings the club, to the way he kisses the trophy, to the way he addresses the media. And for these reasons, Woods' "transgressions," as he called them in a vague apology on his Web site, go far beyond a simple breaking of wedding vows.

What about the silent vow Woods took when he became the name and face of the Tiger Woods Foundation, an organization that has reached more than 10 million young people since it was estab-

lished in 1996?

Tiger is not only letting down his wife. His actions reach every one of his fans. Sure, you can make the argument that he didn't ask for this fame, but you don't rake in \$100 million per year in endorsements hiding behind scoreboards. Tiger busted into the golfing world at a time when Michael Jordan was the biggest, most recognizable athlete around. Before, nobody could fathom MJ's departure from the basketball world and from the limelight. But Tiger was an easy transition, a new athlete that any fan of any degree could get behind. A new role model.

Now, if only I had a big name to agree with me. If I could get somebody really influential to back me up on this whole role model thing, I think it could really hit home. What to do, what to do.

Ah yes, here is a gem of a quote from some Tiger Woods fellow.

Practically makes my point for me: "I think it's an honor to be a role model," Woods said in a Business Week article. "If you are given a chance to be a role model, I think you should always take it because you can influence a person's life in a positive light, and that's what I want to do. That's what it's all about."

Tiger, for 12 years I would have said you epitomized a perfect athlete role model. But now, well, let's just say Phil Mickelson's fan club just gained a new member.

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