

## APPLICATIONS | Applications are up 8 percent for next year

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dents for incoming freshmen, and the overall acceptance has hovered around 3,000 students, she said.

Application rates have fluctuated during the past few years because the application cycle has been changed, Chambers said. The application deadline was moved back a month, so applications are coming in later, she said. Overall, the number of applicants has remained steady, but there's now an upswing with incoming freshmen and transfer students, she said.

"There's so many different places and so many different ways that we're tracking that [8 percent increase], and honestly this time of year, [increase rate] changes daily, and yes, things are looking good for next year," Chambers said. "To say that [Truman's applicant rate is] up 8 percent, I'm not sure is completely accurate."

The 8 percent figure is only made up of a tally of daily applications currently coming in, she said. Even if Truman will not be up 8 percent in applications at the end of the year, more applications are coming in at this point compared to last year, she said. As a result, application processing is moving quickly to inform students about their acceptance as soon as possible, she said.

Scholarships can help get students interested in Truman, but they apply for many reasons, including Truman's reputation, the fact that there isn't an application fee, tuition price and word of mouth from current students, Chambers said.

Budget Director Dave Rector, said Truman's target number of students for the 2010-11 academic year is about 5,800 to 5,850. This year's freshman class has 1,342 students.

The goal for the 2010-11 school year is to have 1,380 freshmen. That goal was not reached this year, partly because of the dramatic drop in international students.

"This is kind of early in the year [but] ... it's great for it to be

up," Rector said. "You get better predictability as you get farther along in the year, in terms of total applications."

More students at Truman would increase revenue through tuition and residence hall capacity, he said. Enrollment this year was down about 100 students, so an increase would help the revenue bounce back up, he said. Extra revenue also would be gained because there wouldn't be additional costs pertaining to faculty or facilities, because Truman wouldn't need to hire extra employees with an 8 percent increase, he said. The added revenue would help level the budget, Rector said.

"Compared to the other public universities, our funding is good," Rector said. "Part of that is our mission, because Truman has a lower student-faculty ratio, so that means more faculty members per student."

Truman's budget for this year is flat because of state funding and tuition not increasing, he said.

Rector said one reason more students are applying is because of Truman's favorable tuition price. Truman's tuition is near the middle compared to Missouri's other universities, he said.

"We're [less expensive than] most of the regional colleges and universities," Rector said.

For example, Rector said that for a Missouri resident, Truman is about \$1,800 cheaper compared to University of Missouri-Columbia.

For the next fiscal year, Gov. Jay Nixon already has indicated that higher education will receive a 5.2 percent cut in state funding. For Truman, that means about a \$2.3 million cut, Rector said. Currently, a little less than half of Truman's funding comes from the state, and the rest is student fees, he said.

Regina Morin, associate vice president for enrollment management, said Truman's application and enrollment trend is very strong, especially this year.

Morin also keeps watch over the distribution of institutional aid.

"Over the last four or five years, application numbers have inflated, but that isn't unusual to Truman ... because online applications have become so popular," Morin said.

Besides online applications, Truman's message is being spread more, which is encouraging more students to apply, she said.

"I think we have a stronger message now in the marketing information than we have [had]," Morin said. "It's a result of listening to the people that are here and listening to our students. ... 'Smart school, brilliant choice, your journey starts here' ... really came out of our own students."

The class of 2009 was Truman's largest graduating class, she said. Morin said demographic changes are making an impact. Across the Midwest, there will be a decrease of about 70,000 high school graduates, which will affect Truman's enrollment as well, she said.

The 8 percent increase has been stable for a few days, Morin said. Overall, applications have been running 4 to 6 percent ahead since fall application tracking began in September, she said. Morin said she thinks the applications will hold onto the increases that are showing up now.

Truman's yield rate — the rate at which accepted students enroll — is high compared to other state schools, with this year's yield at an increase of 45.8 percent, she said. While the yield rate has increased, the number of international students has dropped, she said.

"What has sustained the enrollment has been the traditional new freshman," Morin said. "But statistically, that number is shrinking, and within that shrinking number, the only pool that is growing is the first generation and under-represented [students], which, statistically is not as well prepared and less able to pay."

Truman's goal is to sustain the enrollment of the traditional freshmen and transfer students because that number is quickly growing, one reason being the increasing number of students attending community colleges, she said. Graduate student enrollment is also on the rise, she said.



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

A group of students has been collecting recycled items for a playground.

## PLAY | Truman students create playground for low-income Kirksville kids

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come from a grant received by Head Start. Many of the materials used for the playground were donated by local businesses.

Construction began in October, Koehne said, with student volunteers working alongside organizers to build recycling bin basketball hoops, a board of spinning cylinders where kids can mix and match rotating animal parts and a tire tunnel to be completed in the spring semester.

Volunteers for assembling the playground came from both inside and outside the Grassroots Environmentalism course.

"It was really cool to see how many people got really excited about the project," Koehne said. "I think that it's really exciting and impressive that there is such a group of really committed students who are all really proactive."

Grinde said the students are one of the most enthusiastic groups she has

ever worked with.

"They were very cooperative and it probably would not have happened without their help," she said.

Skosky said the group will complete the playground outside of the course during the spring semester due to schedule conflicts.

"Our semesters don't align with the community's time frame," Skosky said.

Along with time issues, the group said the biggest challenge they faced during the project was obtaining supplies and securing community involvement. Although several Truman students helped in the end, finding volunteers was initially harder than the group thought it would be. The group said they quickly found out that sign-up sheets do not work.

Grinde praised the students' involvement and aid with the Head Start program.

"[Truman students] really are the heartbeat of what keeps our program going," she said.

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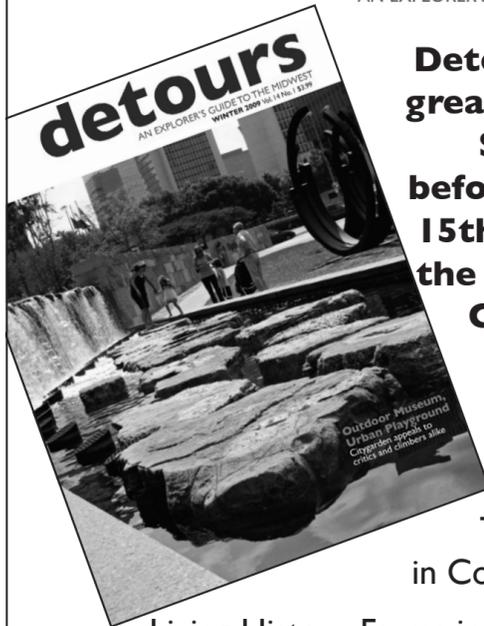
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