

Security delays deserve more disapproval



Tyler Retherford

I was really hoping to see an end to the angry Facebook groups, special meetings and surveys about the new Perimeter Access System for residence halls, but it looks like we'll probably be getting another semester of it.

A recent e-mail to on-campus students stated that the system wouldn't be operational for the spring semester. I know this was cause for rejoicing for many on-campus students who were opposed to the inconveniences posed by the system, but my reaction was

a little different. It's ridiculous and a little embarrassing that after the system has been installed for months, and after the huge amount of arguments regarding the merits of the system, not to mention the fact that more than \$200,000 was spent on the system, it is now mysteriously non-operational.

A security upgrade for our residence halls is way overdue. There have been several incidents of security problems within the residence halls during my time here at the University, one of which was even picked up by my local newspaper back home. The Perimeter Access System isn't exactly a radical approach to college security, it is a common way for universities to protect students. Drury University in my hometown of Springfield has a similar system that works wonderfully. It's clearly a proven system, and the relatively modest price tag seems fair given

the promise of keeping non-students out of the residence halls during times when there are fewer people around to notice. The system isn't perfect, and the fact that we don't have enough money to install it properly is pretty upsetting, but given our lack of funds, an inconvenient yet effective security system is certainly better than no system at all.

It's astounding, given the strong negative reaction to the troubles with contractors on the football field turf project, that a similar bungling in a far more important situation is instead being met with praise. I understand the system poses fairly significant impositions on students, forcing

people to walk around the entire building to carry in groceries or to carry furniture when moving in. However, to value saving such a minor amount of time and effort more than the safety of residents

and the guarantee that the money already spent on the system is properly utilized really is inexcusable.

The e-mail sent to on-campus students informing them of the changes to the Perimeter Access System does little to explain the cause for the moratorium. It merely states that the contractor failed to complete the work. Considering the mechanisms have been mounted to doors for months, certainly the remaining work isn't enough to justify delaying the

system for an entire semester. With the amount of student interest in the manner this system is being implemented, it would seem advisable that the Office of Residence Life make more specific information on the problem readily available, especially given how much of the hostility toward the system was caused by most students only finding out about the system once it already was installed. The only way non-residents even know about this development, as far as I can tell, is by word of mouth from someone who received the e-mail. The Residence Life Web page regarding the system has made no mention of the delay, nor have any other Truman related Web sites.

Tyler Retherford is a junior anthropology major from Springfield, Mo.

"A security upgrade for our residence halls is way overdue."

Health center change creates problems



Alex Boles

Because of the current state of health care in the U.S., I have decided to custom design a protective bubble in which I will permanently reside until further positive consideration of how health care is distributed. This outfit will consist of bubble wrap mittens, a pink studded gas mask and knee-high combat boots.

Drastic? Overdramatic? Certainly, but I can't get sick. I can't break my foot — for the fourth time. And I can't visit the specialist for the pain in my side. Why? My health care provider only allows five doctor visits a year — per family. With a family of five, that's one visit a year each. What if there are six family members? When you have a stepparent with a terminal illness, you tend to have to either stay healthy or suffer.

Alas, I have the Student Health Center. Every year I pay a \$26 fee to guarantee my right to be offered on-campus health care sans co-pays or dealing with insurance companies — a luxury my family and I are more than grateful for with someone as clumsy and sickness-prone as myself.

The health center decided to start accepting insurance cards this semester if a student chooses to use health insurance to pay for fees attributed to services such as a women's health exam or lab test. This is all well and good if you have a better service that offers to cover more than merely five visits per year, but we pay a health center fee for a reason. If I decided to use my insurance at the health center, having the insurance company pay all the fees and have the visit count toward a doctor visit, why am I paying an additional fee with my tuition? Some co-pays

are upwards of \$20, which is more than the lab fee. I would rather pay the lab than the insurance company. Some might argue that the center needs money to sustain itself and order supplies, but the insurance company would be responsible for covering the cost of the visit, lab fees and medication, right?

So, a good question to ask is how will we justify the fee? Will it even be necessary anymore or will the argument be that not all students have insurance so everyone must continue paying the fee? I understand it's not a large amount, but in today's economy, people are concerned with how every penny is spent and how necessary it is to shell money out.

I appreciate the opportunity to utilize my resources and, in turn, help my family keep medical bills low to nonexistent by utilizing the health center and paying the fee without using insurance. I will continue to pay the small fee for the lab instead of the \$20 co-pay and hassle of using up a precious appointment. It's sad how we are rationing our doctor's visits because of the current

state of health care. What am I going to do after college when visiting a health center without using insurance is not an option anymore?

I'm not saying it's a bad idea to implement this new service to the students. I just would not choose to use health insurance at the health center because we already pay a fee for the service, so using insurance would be redundant and would unnecessarily take away a privilege to the rest of my family. This could be a good option for those with higher lab fees but for people like me with minimal coverage, stick with tradition.

Alex Boles is a junior communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

"So, a good question to ask is how will we justify the [health center] fee? Will it even be necessary anymore?"

AROUND THE QUAD

What was the best present you got over the holidays?



"Money."

Pernita Kapila sophomore



"A gray, knit scarf."

Peter Johnson sophomore



"I got a shopping spree for my new room."

Christine Mann junior



"The good weather in Texas during break."

Tracy Milo sophomore

Happiness and material gain shouldn't be linked



Molly Skyles

Let me ask you a few questions. Would owning a new car make you happier? What about having all your loans paid off? Or I bet even the latest iPod would do the trick, right? Like any normal person, you probably answered yes to these questions. I know I did.

We, as residents of the United States, top the charts in being one of the wealthiest countries in the world as well as one of the most powerful countries. However, that doesn't make us the happiest country.

The World Database of Happiness, compiled by a Dutch sociologist based on several surveys, lists Costa Rica as the happiest country out of 148, according to a Jan. 6 article in the New York Times. The United States is ranked as the 20th happiest.

Costa Rica is a tropical paradise. It is home to pristine beaches, exotic wildlife and a beautiful rainforest. It is a vacationer's dream. But the pure beauty of the place is

not reason enough for their extreme happiness. In reality, the United States could learn a lesson from the culture and policies of Costa Rica.

Extreme peacefulness sets Costa Rica apart from other nations. In 1949, the armed forces were dissolved in the country, and investments instead were made in education. With stronger schools, the society has become more stable and less likely to join in conflicts elsewhere in Central America.

Also, the economy in Costa Rica has strengthened because of improved schools. Since 1949, Costa Rica has even become a major exporter of computer chips, and in the health care field, Costa Rica's average life expectancy now is about equal to that of the United States.

This is not an antimilitary column, and I am not telling you to protest war. However, a stronger emphasis on education in the U.S. over the armed forces could do a lot of good for the quality of life as an American, as seen through the example of Costa Rica.

What also struck me as a major difference between the U.S. and Costa Rica is what each nation finds culturally important. In Costa Rica, and most Latin countries for that matter, there is a strong emphasis on family. However, in the U.S., some people can be more concerned with financial capital

over personal relationships.

Take American entertainment, for example. We waste our lives watching shows about rich people and how their lives are so much more luxurious and wonderful than ours because they own 16 BMWs. Really? Money to Americans must actually buy happiness. Also, there is a TV show on A&E that I recently discovered, called Hoarders. This show highlights people who are so emotionally attached to their possessions that they are unable to live their lives. Some people are even facing divorce or jail time because of their inability to part with stuff. What stuff, you ask? It doesn't matter. Having a lot, to an American, means you are worth a lot.

So, in honor of New Year's, I propose a challenge — a resolution of sorts. Let's start being happier, and what better way than following the Costa Rican method? Work hard in school so you can be proud of yourself and your personal accomplishments, which could one day change the world. Let go of that desire to always have the latest material item and just sit down and enjoy the company of your family or a good friend.

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

New trail system offers community involvement



Zach Vicars

With nearly half a foot of snow on the ground, perilously icy roads and sub-arctic wind chills, getting outside is the last thing on most of our minds. Sure, the childhood pastimes of sledding, snowmen and snowball fights still allure us, but when the mercury becomes scarce in that thermometer, it's often more convenient to snuggle up next to the radiator and check Facebook.

Even so, it's important that as Truman students, and at least part-

time residents of Kirksville, we stay informed on what's happening out-of-doors in this great city.

A few months ago I heard an exciting idea called the Forest Lake Area Trail System (FLATS). Construction will begin with connecting trails in Thousands Hills Park, but the long-term goal of this initiative, proposed by Truman professor Royce Kallerud, is to provide a paved, accessible trail from downtown Kirksville to Thousand Hills State Park and Forrest Lake.

In essence, this trail system would cut the round-trip distance to Thousand Hills in half and make a biking or hiking trip out to the lake much more feasible for most Kirksville residents. With the addition of the trail, adventuresome residents could simply take a gentle ride on their bikes through the woods instead of braving the daunting hills and treacherous shoulders

of Highway 6. Furthermore, a connective trail system could help improve public health and provide an excellent marketing tool for the city and the University, especially as students and adults are realizing the importance of staying healthy and active.

But such a wonderful addition to the community does come at a cost. Early cost projections of FLATS are significant, especially for a community of Kirksville's size. To help defer the expense, fundraising efforts already have begun, and the Thousand Hills Rotary Club has agreed to serve as

the FLATS community sponsor.

Still, it is important that Truman students help to raise money for this worthy cause. The beautiful

forests, lakes and farmlands surrounding Kirksville are some of our greatest assets, and we students must lend a hand in making these natural resources available to everyone who is fortunate enough to live in Kirksville. Last month I attended a Bike Co-op meeting at which Rotary Club

member Kevin Baiotto discussed the idea of organizing a moonlight bike ride to help raise money for FLATS, tentatively scheduled for

April 28. Such integrated strategies are essential if we hope to see this vision for our community realized.

However, our community involvement should not end at going on a bike ride or rallying behind local politicians for the FLATS initiative. One of the great things about living and going to school in a small town is that it becomes our town. Unlike giant metropolises that surround other institutions, the size of Kirksville allows the students to be active in shaping the face of the community. We have a rare opportunity to have our voices heard and recognized, so let's make use of it.

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