

TEXT | Questions linger about effectiveness of the emergency text messaging system after students get texts days late



Photo submitted by the Department of Public Safety

After a Student Adviser saw a student with a airsoft gun, one of which is pictured above, DPS sent a campus wide notification via text messaging.

Continued from Page 1 together right, and it came to a good resolution."

Young, Lang, Purnell and McKinnon did not respond to an e-mail from the Index requesting comment for this story.

No charges have been filed as airsoft guns are not against the law, but Johnson said they have been referred to Student Affairs for a possible violation of the Student Conduct Code for possessing airsoft guns, which Johnson described as "pellet gun-like" toy weapons.

John Gardner, interim director of Residence Life, said that even though the situation turned out to be a false alarm, he thinks law enforcement and Residence Life handled the situation properly.

"I think it was handled correctly, because we'd much rather be safe than sorry in something involving a potential firearm," Gardner said.

The emergency text

Johnson credited the emergency text for helping resolve the situation. He said that after the four students with the airsofts received the emergency text, they thought the police might be looking for them and came to the hall desk to turn themselves in. They then turned over the airsofts to DPS.

Johnson, who was at home Sunday night when the 911 call came in to central dispatch, arrived at Dobson about 11:50 p.m. Johnson said that after assessing the situation, he decided to send the text message.

"We really weren't sure what we had yet, so I decided to send the text message," Johnson said. "It worked like it was supposed to, thankfully. So that actually exceeded our expectations."

DPS launched the emergency text message system before the 2007-08 academic year, following the shooting at Virginia Tech in April 2007.

A message was sent out last year to test the system, but Monday was the first time a message had been sent for an emergency situation, Johnson said.

Although Johnson ruled the system successful, Gardner said Residence Life received several e-mails from students concerned that they did not receive the text message or got the message very late.

Johnson said such cases are the fault of cell phone service providers and not a flaw at the University level.

"I talked to our IT people [Monday]," Johnson said. "It got off our server OK. Once it gets off of our server, it's dependent on the individual carriers to get the message out from there."

"I don't know what the carriers' rules are, but sometimes if they get a bunch of messages swarmed on them at once, something might get lost in the mix. That's my understanding of it. As far as our end of it, the technology worked."

Many students who reported not receiving the message

in a timely manner are AT&T customers.

Marisa Giller, AT&T market manager for Missouri, said AT&T has notified its network team that some students did not receive the message and will evaluate what happened to try to prevent further issues.

"The technology used to send text messages — short message service (SMS) — was never designed nor deployed to serve as an emergency communications medium," Giller said in a statement e-mailed to the Index. "Most importantly, texting cannot guarantee the timely delivery of emergency messages or real-time interaction with emergency personnel that is so critical to public safety."

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AT&T market manager for Missouri

Possible consequences for the students

Gilchrist said David Hoffman, assistant dean of student affairs, looks at the evidence in all referral cases to determine

if there was a possible conduct code violation.

Gilchrist said that Hoffman looks at the evidence and hears evidence from the alleged offenders, Hoffman can decide to call an administrative hearing or bring the students in front of the Student Conduct Board.

According to section

18.1 of the Student Conduct Code, "Possession of firearms (including BB, paint, and pellet guns) or any other weapons other than a common pocket knife on University premises or at University sponsored/related activities unless specifically approved by a University official" is prohibited.

Consequences for a student found in violation of section 18.1 range from probation for the remainder of the student's undergraduate career to expulsion, according to the sanctioning guidelines for the Code. There also are some educational sanctions.

But the sanctioning guidelines also state, "the student's prior conduct history, extenuating and mitigating circumstances, as well as the attitude and cooperation of the student all have an impact in determining" any sanctions.

"Every case is looked at on its own merit," Gilchrist said. "One of the principles of University conduct is that you don't decide a case until you hear it. So obviously we'll need to be looking at all of the facts."

Johnson said he doesn't think the students meant any harm by the airsoft guns and probably were playing a game. But Johnson said that because many airsoft guns look like real weapons, they can create dangerous situations.

"The main concern from a law enforcement side is, we're not going to stop and ask questions," Johnson said.

"If somebody points a gun at you, or we see somebody pointing a gun at somebody else, we're going to assume it's a real gun until we can confirm otherwise. And we talked to the young men [Monday] morning about the dangers of that, and I think they clearly understood the situation after that."

ENROLLMENT | Truman faces \$2.5 million budget cut with no increase in enrollment

Continued from Page 1 For the 2009-10 academic year, the federal government provided Truman with \$5 million in stimulus funding.

Interim President Darrell Krueger said Truman should err on the side of frugality and come up with strategies to mitigate the funding crisis.

"We have to tighten our belts and be frugal about it," Krueger said. "We are short in tuition due to the decline in enrollment. State revenue for Missouri is down this year and everybody thinks 2012 will be much worse, so we are looking at those eventualities."

Enrollment woes

Truman's combined undergraduate and graduate enrollment for the Fall 2009 semester was 5,747, compared to 5,842 in Fall 2008 and 5,866 in Fall 2007. This year's enrollment is the lowest in six years.

A number of factors have contributed to enrollment woes. The Missouri Department of Higher Education recently reported that the number of high school graduates in the state had decreased by 68,000.

The shrinking number of high school graduates in Missouri is expected to negatively affect in-state freshman enrollment figures for Truman and other universities until 2014.

Regina Morin, the associate vice president for enrollment management at Truman, said that stiff competition for freshmen between universities and two-year institutions, which have been gaining significant ground against four-year institutions, also has impacted enrollment.

"The competition has been fierce, and it just got much fiercer than ever before," said Morin. "Two-year schools have seen a 29 percent increase in enrollment and the competition for stu-

dents seems to have been stepped up."

The international factor

Truman's enrollment of international freshmen also has declined, from 72 in Fall 2008 to 26 in Fall 2009, and Morin said the school is making frantic efforts to attract international students from a broader base of source countries, as well as out-of-state students, as they pay more than in-state students.

The decline in international freshmen alone accounts for at least \$500,000 in lost tuition revenue for the 2009-10 academic year, and this has prompted the school to launch aggressive marketing campaigns to attract more international students.

Truman is considering extending its source market for international students. Currently, the majority of international students at Truman are from Nepal, and admissions officials are looking at expanding the school's reach into South America and Africa.

State funding down

This week, the Missouri state government released its September 2009 General Revenue Report with a 10 percent decline in revenue collections for the 2010 fiscal year, raising fears that state funding to schools will dry up.

"State funding is certain to go away, and we are looking at how we can be more efficient, stay within our means and still be able to provide the Truman experience," Morin said. "Every school has funding challenges with

fewer dollars from the state."

Linda Lueberrig, Missouri state budget director, said net general revenue collections had fallen from \$1.9 billion for 2008-09 to \$1.71 billion for the 2009-10 fiscal year. In September 2009 alone, Missouri lost \$126 million in net general revenue collections, a 16 percent decline compared to 2008. This has adversely affected the state's capacity to provide increased supplementary funding to universities, leaving many without alternate sources of income.

The admissions department seems optimistic that enrollment will increase for Fall 2010, as they have received significantly more

applications for Fall 2010 compared to those from last fall.

"There is a small indicator of the positive," said Morin. "We are starting out ahead of where we were last year in enrollment with 89 percent more ap-

plicants."

She said this was not necessarily an indication of the number of freshmen who would eventually make it to Truman, because there is competition among schools, so developing strategies to appeal to prospective students is necessary.

In response to the funding shortages, Truman is drafting an array of strategies aimed at rejuvenating its revenue base, including aggressive marketing campaigns aimed at attracting more out-of-state and international students.

"We are working vigorously and head-on to attract enrollment," Morin said.

"State funding is certain to go away, and we are looking at how we can be more efficient."

Regina Morin
associate vice president for enrollment management

SURGERY | Krueger bounces back from second surgery to place a stent in an artery leading to his heart

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Provost Troy Paino worked with Krueger at Winona State University as well as at Truman. Although he has a longer work relationship with Krueger than others, Paino said there were no changes to Krueger as he came closer to his heart attack.

"I think he's doing really well," Paino said. "I think that after his second procedure where he had the stent put in last Monday, he seems just tremendously better."

Paino said he regularly asks Krueger how he's doing and how he's feeling. Paino said he is getting a better response every time.

"He had been telling me this last week that he's really been missing golf," Paino said.

Paino was playing golf with Krueger during the time Krueger thinks he had his heart attack. Paino said he is relieved that he won that day before Krueger's heart attack.

"This summer we got out on the golf course quite a bit," Paino said. "It was good because after work, we would go out and play nine holes. It was a chance to talk about things at the University."

When Krueger and Paino met Monday, Krueger asked to play golf that afternoon. Paino said he thought there were ulterior motives to this first game.

"I've been talking about how I beat him the day he was having his heart attack," Paino said. "I think he wants revenge."

Monday marked the three-week anniversary of the day Krueger first went

to the hospital. Paino beat Krueger by only a few strokes in a nine-hole round. Paino said he was impressed at how well Krueger played despite his heart attack and two surgeries.

"I would never live it down if he actually beat me while having a heart attack," Paino said. "I would be forever known as the guy who lost to the person having a heart attack."

Although he looks back on the golf round three weeks ago lightheartedly, Paino said that Krueger was not himself that day.

"He was clearly not feeling well that day," Paino said. "I could tell he was struggling on the back nine."

After the two operations to restore full blood flow to Krueger's heart, Paino said the president is back to being his old self again.

"He gets up every morning and walks three miles," Paino said. "He was doing that last week. He hasn't slowed down."

Executive Secretary Traci Hill sees and talks with the president every day. She said Krueger appears to be feeling much better.

"He's doing wonderful," Hill said. "I think he has more energy than he probably had before."

Hill and others who work close to Krueger have been telling him to go slow. Although Krueger may take an extended lunch break now and then, Hill said his routine has not changed much.

"We are trying to encourage him to slow down a little bit, but he's probably at the same pace he had before," Hill said.

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