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102 years of excellence

Thursday, September 16, 2010 The University's student-produced newspaper Kirksville, Mo., 63501

MDHE forces universities to re-evaluate

BY ANDREA HEWITT AND BRENNNA MCDERMOTT
News Editor and Editor in Chief

The Missouri Department of Higher Education has begun the process of examining more than 4,000 academic programs across the state for departments that graduate small numbers of students. Universities then will decide whether those programs should continue.

MDHE, at the direction of Gov. Jay Nixon, will compile data on all two- and four-year public colleges

in Missouri to present a list of programs that don't meet the productivity threshold to the universities and to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

Undergraduate programs that don't meet the productivity threshold are characterized by an average of 10 or fewer graduates during the past three years. Master's programs that graduate five or fewer students per year will be examined also.

After the programs below the threshold have been identified, universities will analyze the programs

to determine if they are essential to the curriculum, can be combined with other programs or can be eliminated and will present their decisions to the coordinating board.

"It's to help institutions identify programs that are some of their strong points — some of their areas of excellence — and help them balance out the areas they want to emphasize," said Kathy Love, Public Information Officer for MDHE.

The coordinating board doesn't have the authority to eliminate programs, Love said. Only the gov-

erning body of each university (the Board of Governors at Truman) can make any cuts or changes to academic programs.

Love said it will be up to the universities to develop their own criteria for justifying or eliminating programs that are under productive. They will have to provide reasoning to the coordinating board for retaining such programs.

MDHE will consult with Truman on its data findings to make sure there aren't any discrepancies.

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"It's to help institutions identify programs ... and help them balance out the areas they want to emphasize."

Kathy Love
MDHE Public Information Officer

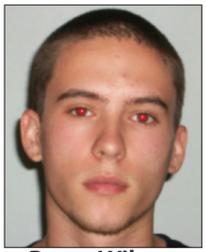
Kirksville man arrested on assault charges

BY DAN WARNER
Assistant News Editor

A Kirksville man has been charged with domestic assault of a pregnant woman.

Brent Wilson, 18, was arrested last Friday and charged with both domestic assault in the second degree and false imprisonment for an incident that occurred Sept. 9, according to the probable cause statement.

Wilson is accused of assaulting the victim, who is four months pregnant, at their shared residence.



Brent Wilson

Wilson pushed and punched the defendant's chest before sitting on her legs and stomach and biting her neck in several locations, according to the probable cause statement. Wilson also is accused of locking the door of the residence, refusing to allow the victim to leave.

The domestic assault charge is a class C felony and carries a punishment of up to one year in the county jail, up to seven years in the Missouri Department of Corrections, a fine of \$5,000 or any combination of fine and imprisonment. The false imprisonment charge is a class A misdemeanor carrying up to a year in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

Matt Wilson, Adair County prosecuting attorney, said domestic assault is not a problem in Kirksville alone.

"Unfortunately, it's a problem all throughout the state," Matt Wilson said. "We're not alone in fighting this ongoing battle with domestic violence."

Matt Wilson said one of the major problems the prosecutor's office has in dealing with domestic violence cases is that the victims often have a dependency on their abusive significant other.

"What happens so often, they are so reliant upon their abuser that they come in very quickly into our office stating that they don't want charges brought, they won't cooperate, that they want their individual out of jail, and it just continues the cycle of abuse," Matt Wilson said.

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What are you signing?

Loans take long-term toll on students as outstanding loans approximate \$700,000

BY BAILLIE JAMES
Staff Reporter

Forty-four percent of undergraduate students and forty-nine percent of graduate students at Truman took out loans for the last school year, but students have tentative plans for repayment.

The approximate amount of Foundation loans outstanding for alumni and students who have left Truman is \$693,000, according to the Business Office.

Kathy Elsea, Director of Financial Aid, said most students accepted the maximum amount of federal aid offered. The total amount of federal aid disbursed to Truman students for the 2009-10 school year was \$16,911,102.

She said most students usually try to get

federal loans rather than loans from private lenders, because private lenders require a co-signer and do not have as many safety nets if a student is unable to make payments.

"The main thing is communication and keeping in touch with your lender, because they really do not want anyone to go in default," Elsea said. "If you're having trouble making your payments, [the lender] can help students out. That is where you hate to see alternative loan debt, because they just do not have as many built-in safety features to keep the student from getting in trouble."

Alumna Brittany Burke graduated in May and said she just applied to consolidate her loans (combining them into a new loan to pay only one lender) and will start repayment in November.

"About three months after I graduated I got something in the mail telling me everything I owed," Burke said. "That was kind of a depressing day, but at least you know, and you have it on paper."

Burke plans to request income-based pay — monthly payments capped at an affordable amount based on the borrower's annual income and family size. When she finds a full-time job, she could switch to another plan to pay off her debt faster.

Other payment methods include a standard payment plan of at least \$50 per month, an extended payment plan of no more than 25 years and a graduated payment plan in which the monthly payment amount increases every two years.

Burke said she does not regret any of her debt and that she could always apply for forbearance if necessary. This would delay payment of the student loans for a term agreed upon by the lender and borrower — usually about six months.

"My senior year I took out a loan so I could afford to apply to graduate schools and take the Graduate Record Examination," Burke said. "I don't regret it. I didn't need to take out as much as I did, but I'll

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Lendee Signature



Health fee helps offset Health Center costs

Health services fee helps pay for:

- Access to all counseling services at no charge
- Pandemic & other emergency planning & intervention
- Immunization tracking and enforcement
- TB program implementation, intervention, tracking & compliance
- Training and educational services for students
- Sample and over-the-counter medications at no charge to students

According to Brenda Higgins, health center director and university counseling services director,

BY STEPHANIE HALL
Staff Reporter

Student's health services fees pay for more than one-third of the health center and counseling services budgets — approximately \$900,000.

Last January, the Student Health Center began billing students' health insurance in addition to the \$26 health center fee they pay each semester. Before this change, students could visit the health center at no cost other than for labs or tests.

After they started billing insurance companies, the health center implemented a \$30 visit fee for students who don't have insurance, and students can

now use their insurance to help pay for the visit fee, labs and tests.

The University enacted a health center fee in 2005 to offset the cost of the health center and counseling services.

The health center fee was put in place after in 2005. The original fee was \$25 per semester, but was raised to \$26 a few years later to account for inflation. During that time the cost of running health services has increased by approximately 4 percent each year, Rector said.

He said the health center fee raises \$282,000 a year, which pays for more than one-third of the cost of the health center and Counseling Services' combined budget of about \$842,000.

Brenda Higgins, health center director and university counseling services director, said increasing medical costs and decreasing university funding led them to look for alternative sources of income.

"The state couldn't continue to support those kinds of increases, so we looked at what would be the best bang to try to generate revenue without being an undue burden on students," Higgins said.

She said they talked to students, Student Senate, parents and legislators in addition to looking at other schools to find the best way to help minimize their budget shortfall. They decided billing stu-

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