

The last leg of the race

Follow three seniors during the last semester of their undergraduate careers

BY BURGUNDY RAMSEY
Staff Reporter

Every student that enters a university does so with a single goal. Although the paths to this goal are as varied as the students themselves, the goal remains the same: graduation.

Seniors entering their final semester often get a wake-up call of just how close they are to their goal. The Index will be following three seniors throughout their last semester, chronicling their trials and tribulations as well as the triumphs of their undergraduate career.

Sarah Backhaus

Meet Sarah Backhaus. She is a political science major, justice systems minor planning on going to law school. Like most Truman students, Backhaus is active in many organizations on campus, including Truman Forensics Union and Alpha Sigma Gamma. She said she considers herself laid back and loves to be around people. Backhaus said she first came to Truman for the same reason as many other students.

"It was a good quality school for a fairly cheap [price]," Backhaus said. "I also came to join the debate team because they have a history of success."

Backhaus's major was unexpected for her. She said it was a lot harder than she anticipated. Although she considered switching, she eventually decided to stick with it.

"I'm really happy with the result," Backhaus said. "I feel like I

learned. I have higher goals now, higher expectations."

Backhaus said she also has come to appreciate the school. She likes its size and the size of Kirksville.

Overall, Backhaus is glad to be entering her last semester.

"I am just purely relieved to have the easy schedule, littered with classes I've wanted to take for a long time that I think are going to be really interesting," Backhaus said. "I'm dreading leaving and getting closer to going into the real world, but I'm also excited about just being done."

Backhaus said she plans to go on to law school next fall. She will spend this semester finishing her applications and choosing where she's going to end up. Right now, her options are wide open.

McKayla Beattie

Meet McKayla Beattie. Beattie is a psychology major who wants to get her Master of Arts in Education. Beattie said she enjoys working with children. She gets a chance to do this through K-Life, and she also is a Girl Scout troop leader. Beattie is involved in Tau Lambda Sigma, The Society of Dance Arts and Campus Christian Fellowship. The self-described caring, empathetic person is different than most seniors — she has completed her degree program in three years. Beattie came in with credit hours and has taken classes during the summer. Because of this, she still thinks of herself as a junior in a lot of ways, she said.

"I feel like just when I'm getting settled in and then I'm graduating," Beattie said. "I have so many mixed feelings. It feels like it came super fast. It's a little stressful and kind of scary."

While money was a factor for Beattie in her decision to come to Truman, she said she also likes the atmosphere. She said it really exceeded her expectations.

"I was excited to go to a good school," Beattie said. "But then once I got here and got to know people, it's really grown on me."

Beattie said that she feels like she came into it kind of blind, not knowing what to expect. She said it has allowed her to find subjects that she is passionate about.

"I'm busier than I ever have been," Beattie said. "Truman has allowed me to find stuff that I really love."

Her passion is children. She plans to graduate in May and immediately start the MAE program in the summer. She will spend the summer and fall taking classes at Truman and will student teach next spring.

She is looking forward to her last semester as an undergraduate. She wants to finish strong while making as many memories as possible.

Andy Bader

Meet Andy Bader. He is a business major with a concentration in management. Bader juggles academics, working, wrestling and his involvement with the Student Athletic Advisory Committee.

Bader, a fifth-year senior, has many goals for his last semester. The biggest involving his wrestling career. Bader, who has been wrestling since he was 10 years old, would like to finish up his career as an All American, a goal he's had since graduating high school. Bader came to Truman knowing he wanted to wrestle.

"It's been tough trying to balance a sport and academics, but I kinda knew that going into it," Bader said. "If I wasn't up to the challenge I wouldn't have come to Truman."

Bader said the amount of work he had to do on his own for his classes was unexpected when he came, but it's taught him how to balance his time between all of his activities.

During wrestling season especially, Bader stays incredibly busy. He said that although he's very focused this time of year, he's more outgoing during the off-season.

He is both looking forward to and dreading graduation. He is sad to leave friends and to end his wrestling career but optimistic about the future.

"I'm ready for a new phase in my life," Bader said. "I'm ready to go out and see what the real world has in store for me."

Bader is not entering the career world without options — his brother has offered him a job in realty, but he is keeping it as a fall back plan. For now, he's considering all possibilities.



Top right, senior business major Andy Bader checks out a customer at his job at Smitty's Westport Package Liquor. Above left, senior Sarah Backhaus talks with her friend senior Jacob Green in the Pickler Memorial Library bubble Monday afternoon. Backhaus is a political science major. Above right, senior McKayla Beattie browses in the children's books section of the library. Beattie said she aspires to teach elementary school, most likely a second grade.



Congratulations!

The McNair Program welcomes its 2011 cohort of Scholars:

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Christopher Duda - Mathematics

Jamie Duran - Communication Disorders

James Fisher - Mathematics

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Lauren Neeson - Justice Systems

Rebecca Pursley - Art History

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2: McNair participants will attain a baccalaureate degree within three years of entry into the program.

3: Bachelor degree recipients will enroll in a post-baccalaureate program by the fall term of the academic year immediately following completion of that degree.

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