

Tenure system must also fit student needs



Connor Riley

At least once a semester, I end up in a 50 minute class that feels like five hours, waiting impatiently for the end of each session and wondering how the professor got a doctorate in the first place. Many of my friends and fellow students have had similar experiences.

We've all heard horror stories about professors who don't know how to teach or are apathetic about students' concerns because of the inconvenience it might cause them. Some students I have talked to even went to the department chair to complain about incompetence in

the classroom and were told simply that nothing can be done because the teacher in question has tenure.

Tenure is a status that guarantees job security and is attained by a professor after a number of years (usually seven) working for a university. It is mainly for those who intend to spend the rest of their careers at that university. According to one professor I talked to, tenure originally was conceived to prevent the firing of professors without just cause, specifically professors who hold controversial views in their respective fields but also those who have controversial political or social values or lead unusual lifestyles, and it is granted after an evaluation of a professor's research, teaching and service. Ideally, this would encourage new discussions within the different fields of academia by allowing professors to assert their own theories about a given subject without fear of losing their jobs.

In theory, this system sounds like

a great idea. It provides job security for longtime teachers and protects freedom of speech in academia. However, more often than not, tenure allows its recipients to coast for the rest of their careers. It also effectively eliminates competition from the newer generations of teachers. Teachers who are willing to work harder for less pay to get their own piece of the proverbial pie and who are still denied the protection and pay of those teachers who long ago forgot how to communicate with students. This is not only unfair but also contradictory to many of the principles instilled in us during our early education.

Growing up, we were all taught about the greatness of the merit system, that the more you work, the more you get. We were told that title no longer granted privilege to coast through life without any effort. We were not told that we could work really hard for a specific period in our lives and then stop trying once we

reached a certain level of success.

In cases where professors continually underperform or receive negative student feedback, tenure should not be an excuse for inaction by the administration. Professors who only go through the motions or fail to reach out to their students should be eliminated from the institutions they work for, not protected by a system which grants job security while asking for nothing in return. These professors, who are in my experience a small minority of the Truman faculty, do not reflect well on the University. When a teacher repeatedly receives poor student evaluations and nothing is done about it, students feel as if the administration regards their opinions as irrelevant. And, as paying customers, the students should have some say concerning the quality of the service provided.

I'm not suggesting that the administration should go on a firing spree. However, tenured teachers hold highly sought-after positions, and

those who stop trying after acquiring this coveted status should be stripped of the privileges granted by it and put on some kind of probation. I'm more than willing to give professors who have lost touch with the student body a second chance, but the administration should let them know that incompetence is not acceptable at a school that likes to call itself "The Harvard of the Midwest."

Although the professors in question are a minority among the Truman faculty, they are common enough that the different departments should value and evaluate teaching ability over intelligence or past accomplishments because, simply put, having a doctorate doesn't automatically qualify someone to be entrusted with our futures.

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AROUND THE 'VILLE

Can money buy you happiness?



"No, money is a necessity in life, but it can't buy the love of your family and friends."

Marti Poush
Kirksville resident



"The wealthiest people I know are not the happiest. Happiness lies within."

Eva Buck
Kirksville resident



"Money is not the most important thing in life, happiness is, but money does help you get there."

Liz Srnka
Kirksville resident



"No, the people you love in life provide you with the real happiness."

Mary Sieren
Kirksville resident

Money buys satisfaction in life



Molly Skyles

They say money can't buy happiness. I disagree. Food to eat, clothes to wear and a home to live in all make me pretty happy, and I have them all because of money.

Now before everyone bites my head off and calls me a money-hungry, apathetic loner, hear me out. Money is not the sole reason people are happy, but it does not automatically lead to unhappiness.

While a lot of dough cannot replace the priceless relationships and memories that lead to a lifetime of fulfillment, it can alleviate the stresses of everyday life. People become increasingly happy as their salary increases, up to \$75,000 per year. This amount has been proven to ease the tensions of ever-increasing medical bills and insurance payments. It will not buy happiness, but it will buy satisfaction, according to U.S. researchers in a September 2010 article on reuters.com.

When I'm satisfied with money, I am pretty happy. Let's face it, when was the last time you saw someone jumping for joy at the sight of the last past-due bill before the electricity is shut off or going out to celebrate the eviction notice because there wasn't enough to pay the mortgage? Never.

It isn't all our fault. It's our culture. American media tell us that to be happy we must have the latest iPod, car, makeup or computer. Even certain foods will make us happier. Hershey's slogan is "Pure Hershey's. Pure Happiness." I love chocolate, and at the end of a rough day it does provide me with momentary comfort. However, "pure happiness" is a bit of a stretch. Is a chocolate bar going to pay my rent or buy me the car that I so desperately need to leave me stress-free and happy? If it will, let me know, and I will gladly take up a chocolate-only diet.

Researchers at the Gallup World Poll took on the task of finding out which country was the happiest. They conducted different types of surveys at various times, with thousands of people per country. In July 2010, the research concluded that out of 155 countries, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands were the happiest.

These countries, all in the same region, also all enjoy high levels of wealth and prosperity. Denmark, the world's happiest country, had a gross domestic product of \$36,000 per capita in 2009, which is higher than 196 of 227 countries, according to the CIA. In other words, part of the overwhelming joy present in Denmark is because of the high amount of goods and services produced in the country. These things lead to stability and well-being and are all possible because of massive amounts of moolah.

In these countries, and across the world, the size of your wallet says a lot about you. It determines where you will live, what you will

drive, what you will eat and where you will travel. Though these are merely material wants, not dire needs, they do provide pleasure in life. And pleasure is definitely a quality of happiness.

To really argue that money can buy happiness, I would need to define the word universally, which is impossible. For someone battling cancer, happiness could be a clean bill of health. For someone who is homeless, happiness could be a warm bed. For a child, happiness could be as simple as extra dessert.

Regardless of our individual happiness barometers, I think most would agree that health, security and rewarding relationships are all important factors in happiness. And while relationships do not need money to flourish, health and security usually do. How could someone with a serious medical condition possibly relax and focus on getting back to health if he can't pay the medical bills? Or what about someone who just lost her job? Her security and future is greatly at risk, and "happy" is probably not the best adjective to describe the situation.

While I would never trade my friends and family for extra cash, I would make some sacrifices to make more money so that I could live a life of ease and contentment. So next time you hear that age-old saying, think twice, because money can buy more than you think.

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Online dating spoils college experience



Anna Meier

Looking for love? Just log on. In the last year, 17 percent of couples who got married met on an online dating site. Their courtship was typically less than half as long as that of couples who met in real-life situations, according to an April 30, 2010 report from Match.com.

While I think that online dating can be a great resource for people over the age of 40, I'm skeptical about younger people jumping on the bandwagon too soon. Maybe I'm being a defeatist, but joining the online dating world seems like a white flag — a surrender to the stresses and tortures of actually meeting people face to face.

The online dating trend of recent years is just part of a larger concern I have with people interacting with one another on a virtual rather than actual basis. As if Facebook doesn't take up enough of our time, allowing us to be consumed with the way we look, changing profile pictures weekly and "untagging" photos that make us look more unsavory than usual. Chances are that you spend more time looking at your own profile than anyone else's when you're on Facebook.

I would argue that Facebook and similar sites are probably one of the reasons many people feel pressured into online dating. Imagine you're a freshman in college who sees pictures of his or her friends who go to other schools and are constantly going to parties, looking glamorous and high on life with a dozen different members of the opposite sex. You wonder why you aren't doing the same thing and think that venturing farther into the Internet will make you more popular and help you get attention from possible love interests.

First of all, things on Facebook aren't always what they seem. It's pretty simple to make your life look a lot more fun than it really is. Also, if this hypothetical person hadn't been on Facebook, he or she would have never seen these people from other schools and the

grand time they're having, eliminating the jealousy and angst now felt about his or her own life.

The point is that spending more time on the computer might help people find love after they have literally tried everything else and are in a place in their lives where not many new people are coming along. College, however, is the antithesis of that place.

Sure, we go to a small school. It might seem sometimes like there's no one dateable out there, but someone who attends a school with 40,000 students might feel that way just as much as someone who attends a school of 6,000. Every semester we get a completely new set of faces. We have the opportunity to join any club on campus, immediately opening up our horizons to new people. I know bars aren't the ideal place to meet people for long-term relationships, but there's never a time where I walk into a bar and think, "I know every person in this place, and there's not a single one of them I could go on a date with."

Dating online in college seems to be a good way for people to miss out on the opportunities surrounding them in real life. Sure, it's scary to walk up to a stranger and introduce yourself, but that's the way it's supposed to be. There's an adrenaline rush when putting yourself out there, but it also shows a wealth of confidence that sitting behind a computer screen doesn't allow for.

On top of all of this, one of the largest existing dating sites hides less attractive users from the attractive ones based on user rankings, according to an August 2010 article from the Huffington Post. So if not enough people view your profile and rank it high enough, you'll be stuck in the bottom 50 percent, only able to view other profiles that didn't make it into the pretty category.

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'Don't ask, don't tell' policy penalizes differences



Nicola Fish

"Don't ask, don't tell" could be a great tagline for a movie or an inside joke. You also could picture it as a slogan for some celebrity perfume. In reality, though, "Don't ask, don't tell" is a serious and controversial issue.

"Don't ask, don't tell" is the law currently in place that prohibits open homosexuality in the military. If the person in charge doesn't ask, then the service member doesn't have to tell. This law implies that if service members keep their private lives separate

from their work, then they will be not be penalized.

Some think this law is not a big deal, but this is not the conclusion I came to. Three months ago, I hadn't even heard of this law. I had assumed, naively, that this kind of discriminatory measure would have been repealed years ago. Laws like this should have been made null and void when the Civil Rights Act was passed in the 1960s. The whole point of the Civil Rights Act was to stop discrimination, but somehow "Don't ask, don't tell" has snuck its way into the system. Since the "Don't ask, don't tell" law was put in place in 1993, there have been 12,000 dismissals of homosexual men and women serving in the Army, according to the Human Rights Campaign website. This does not take into account those who quit for fear of being discovered or those who didn't apply because of the required silence.

So why is this law still in place? One reason could be that a job in the military is perilous and

any change to the system could be dangerous. This is usually the argument used to keep the law in place. However, this kind of thinking could also be applied to careers in medicine. As a doctor, you too are dealing with life and death situations, yet it's perfectly acceptable to have a homosexual doctor. Arguments in favor of keeping the law are that housing heterosexuals could create romantic situations. This argument was used against

women in the past. It shouldn't matter what sexuality you are, A person's sexuality could conflict

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with their job's purpose in any career. Referring again to medical careers, think about the relationship between patients and doctors. You could have two heterosexuals of the opposite sex put in a situation where there is a possibility of romance, and technically this could affect their ability to do the job. Does this mean the "Don't ask, don't tell" law should be extended to cover this career too? For that matter, it could be applied to any career that puts together

people of any sexual orientation who could possibly be attracted to each other. Of course, these are extreme examples, but this shows the ridiculousness of the law.

Basic human rights, as written in the Constitution, are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The idea of liberty is that people are free to be who they are. Homosexuals in the military shouldn't have to hide who they are, they shouldn't have to worry about being fired any minute for something they do not have control of and they shouldn't have to choose between their private life and work. Homosexual members of the military have picked their career because they are willing to die to protect their country. It's time we put laws in place to protect them.

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