

INDEX EDITORIAL

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OUR VIEW

Positive campaigning proves ineffective

There is a reason we don't read many stories about successful politicians who don't slam their opponents. It is because they don't exist.

District 2 Representative Rebecca McClanahan (R) was defeated Tuesday by Zachary Wyatt (D). Wyatt won 60.6 percent of District 2 votes (see story, page 1). Although McClanahan is more experienced in Jefferson City, better spoken and held in high regard throughout the district, she was defeated.

McClanahan lost because she refused to play the game. Her 100 percent positive campaign lost her the election.

This isn't surprising. Politicians always say they want to run positive campaigns. That is, until they air a commercial during "Grey's Anatomy." A political campaign isn't going to spend millions of dollars on a 30-second ad that doesn't follow what they've found to be the best way to impact voters — bashing their opponents.

In Maine, gubernatorial candidate Eliot Cutler was defeated by Paul LePage by narrow margins. Cutler told WABI Channel 5 that he was proud of the positive campaign he ran — "one he hopes stuck a dagger in the heart of negative campaigning in the state."

We've got news for ya, Cutler. You lost. The only thing you've stuck a dagger into is the heart of the positive campaign theory — you're just another in a line of many who have proven time and time again that positive campaigning does not win elections.

McClanahan said in the Oct. 14 edition of the Index that voters are frustrated and turned off by negative campaigning. And that might partially be true. We've all been annoyed by attacks from one politician to another. But although we are tired of it, voters have proven it works. We may hope negative campaigning

will stop altogether, but as long as we show politicians that we don't mind that they rip their competitors to shreds, they will continue to tell the country why we shouldn't vote for the other guy, not necessarily we should vote for them.

McClanahan also told the Index Tuesday night that she "will have no difficulty looking myself in the mirror and knowing that I gave this my best and that we took the high road. I have no regrets in terms of that."

We can appreciate that she wants to look in the mirror with pride each morning — we all do — but we also want to be employed, and we all also want to be winners. The good and the honorable don't get very far in American politics — and that probably is not going to change any time soon.

No American president in our time has ever been liked by everyone. That is the beauty of our democratic process. We have competition. Competition can push its participants to work harder, to be more accountable and to be better leaders. Unfortunately, it also can make politics more corrupt, back-door and cutthroat.

McClanahan managed to come out of four years in the Missouri House of Representatives (seemingly) unscathed. She made a promise to run a positive campaign, and she seems to have kept that promise. She has come out of Missouri Congress with her morals corruption free. But her goal wasn't to make that exit — at least, not so soon.

It's unfortunate that the political scenery of our country has shown us being nice doesn't win campaigns, but that is the reality. McClanahan was not incompetent. She was not irresponsible. She was a good representative. But she lost because she refused to fight fire with fire. And she still got burned.

CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail index@truman.edu, call us at 660-785-4449 or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo., 63501.

° In an article on page one of the Oct. 28 edition of the Index, Ameren Missouri was misidentified as AmerenUE Missouri.

° In the Prop B article on page 10 of the Oct. 28 edition of the Index, it was stated that under the bill, breeders are limited to 50 dogs, 10 being female. However, the provisions in the bill only apply to breeders with 10 or more female dogs, and breeders are only allowed 50 dogs, male or female.

° On page 15 of the Oct. 28 edition of the Index, Lisa Miller's presentation in the Women's and Gender Studies Conference was said to be held at 12:30 on Friday. It was actually held at 10:30.

CARTOON

By Sam Kyker



Letters to the Editor

TSU staff worth must be recognized

The Oct. 28, 2010 issue of the Index included the story, "Faculty Salaries Lacking." While this is an important story and a significant problem on campus, there is a large part of the picture that is missing, not only from the story in the Index, but also in the discussions campuswide. The missing piece of the conversation is the identical compensation issue concerning the University staff.

The staff has always played an integral part in the University. I know that if you ask any faculty member, administrator or student about the staff, they will gladly say, "Of course the staff is important to Truman," or "They keep things together," or "They're invaluable," or "They should know they're appreciated" or some other variation on these comments. It's good that this is the general sentiment about the staff, but the issue is that you have to ask first. In order for faculty and administrators to think or talk about staff, they have to be prompted.

The story in the Index mentions the staff of Truman as a side note in one of Dr. Zoumaras' quotes:

"In two years, if the budget crisis has eased or disappeared, my intent is to encourage the administration, aside from all other requirements that the institution faces, that the first by far, and most important, priority is to rectify the failure to adequately compensate the faculty, and, I should add, the staff as well," Zoumaras said.

I appreciate that we get the side note, but I think we deserve to be more than just a side note.

At the all University meeting, President Troy Paino used a grid compar-

ing the numbers of Truman's student population and workforce to those of Northwest Missouri State University. He talked about the fact that Truman has almost 100 more faculty members than Northwest Missouri State University. However, he failed to mention that Truman operates with 76 fewer staff members. Seventy-six bodies to process housing, handle registration errors, run financial aid, work on student accounts and provide a multitude of other services that make the Truman Experience what it is.

While the faculty continue to have opportunities in promotion and tenure which include faculty raises, staff have no such opportunity. At the time that administrator salaries were being adjusted, staff members were given promotions but no increase in pay because there was "no money in the budget." The inequality of the situation is undeniable. The three reasons that Paino gave for the increase in salaries are valid reasons, and I do not argue that they were rightly given. My argument is that there are possibly hundreds of other identical situations all across campus with University staff members. Offices where the staff has been reduced are obviously taking on additional work. In some cases, one person is taking on the entire responsibilities of another person. No raises have been given.

People may wonder what happened with the staff classification and compensation study from a couple years ago that was supposed to address the issue of unequal staff salaries. The answer is, nothing very productive. Hourly staff members were given some raises, for which I am sure those staff were grateful. But salaried staff

members were completely left out of these raises. Hourly secretarial positions in some offices make up to tens of thousands of dollars more than professional/salaried staff in the same office. This is not an exaggeration. It is not a secret. All state salaries are published. Still, these inequalities go unaddressed. I understand that the budget is tight, but the staff members deserve the same attention as any other constituent on campus. Even if all of these cases can't be amended at this moment, they should at least be acknowledged with equal importance.

When I expressed these feelings to Paino in his Coffee with the President session, he expressed that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. He said that staff salaries are a priority in his mind but that he hasn't highlighted them in the discussion because his priority has been to answer the complaints of faculty. I think it's a credit to the staff that despite these inequities, we have not been squeaky.

However, if the quiet strength that we add to the University is going to be overlooked and disregarded simply because no one has spoken up, then it's time to make some noise. I would not typically speak so forthrightly, because I feel that the morale of the campus community is of infinite importance and that difficulties should be dealt with at a local level, if possible. However, we have come to a time where I feel that I would not be doing my duty as Staff Council chairwoman if I did not speak up for the staff on campus. So, here I am being "squeaky" for the staff.

Rebecca Charles
assistant registrar/
Staff Council chairwoman

INDEX

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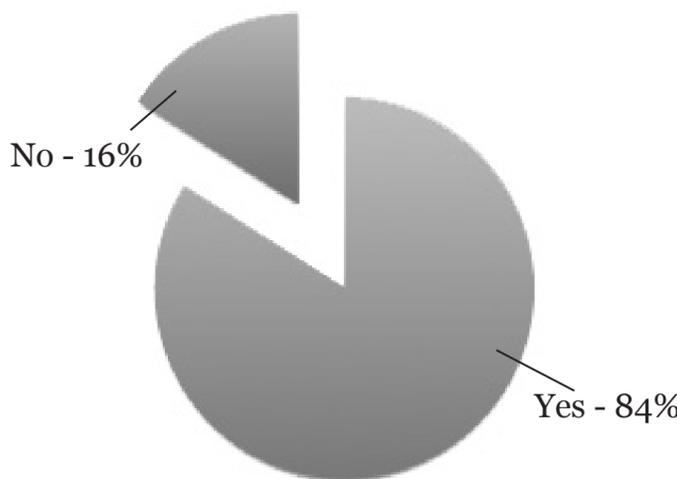
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