

# All eyes on: Susan Plassmeyer

BY KATE LINMAN  
Staff Reporter

As a sophomore during 1984, Susan Plassmeyer became the first student representative to Truman State's Board of Governors. Twenty-eight years later, Plassmeyer is returning to the board, but this time as a member. She has had two perspectives while serving with the board and her experiences have helped her during both terms.

Plassmeyer was confirmed as a member to the Board Feb. 23 by the Missouri legislature. Her dedication to serving Truman has led her to tackle issues for the Board, like budget constraints, both as a student and an alumna.

"I think that the opportunity to serve on the board, especially because it was the first time a student was permitted to serve on the board, would have been something in keeping with my other volunteer activities on the campus," Plassmeyer said.

When the Missouri legislature debated the issue of requiring a student representative on the board, Myra Baiotto, who served on the Board from 1983 to 1989, said she thought the students' point of view was important to Truman's Board of Regents.

Sophomore Michael Bushur, current student representative to the Board, said it is important to have a student representative on the Board because the decisions the board makes have the greatest impact on students. Bushur said he recently met Plassmeyer in Jefferson City. After reviewing her résumé, he said he thinks Plassmeyer will bring valuable experience that is relevant to the Board.

"I think that it would be useful for her coming into this with an idea of how the board operates," Bushur said.

Plassmeyer said her experience as a Truman student and as the student representative to the Board will help her with her new position. But she thinks the most helpful experience was being a student attending Truman on scholarships.

"The time I was a student also coincided with the end of a recession in '81 and '82," she said. "In some ways I have a parallel expe-



Submitted photo  
Alumna Susan Plassmeyer was the first student representative to the Truman State Board of Governors during 1984. She was confirmed as a current board member Feb. 23.

rience of understanding how challenging that was for students and how stressful the time was. I think that perspective will be helpful."

Former Missouri Gov. Kit Bond confirmed Plassmeyer as the first student representative Nov. 6, 1984. She said she received a call from Jefferson City letting her know she was chosen and felt honored.

Plassmeyer said she heard some of the Board members had concerns, while the Missouri legislature was debating the issue of a student representative. Once she was on the Board, Plassmeyer said the members were friendly, helpful and gracious.

Baiotto said she didn't know of anyone who wasn't delighted to work with Plassmeyer and to understand the students' perspective.

"I thought, 'Why haven't we done this before?'" Baiotto said. "It just makes sense as far as the business we are in."

Plassmeyer said she made the decision early to be careful choos-

ing which issue to speak about first. She didn't speak up at the first meeting because the items on the agenda were not relevant to the student experience and weren't within her expertise, like administrative duties and operation issues.

"I waited to speak about student issues, and that went a long way to helping the Board understand what I could contribute," Plassmeyer said. "I thought it would help anything I had to say carry more weight than if I spoke about every topic."

Plassmeyer said she knew her impression on the board would not only affect her term, but also the student representatives who were to follow. She said she really felt like the Board members listened to what she had to say. They would engage her with follow-up questions when she spoke, she said.

Plassmeyer said she looks forward to serving on the board again.

See full story online at [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com)

# Students battle spring allergies

BY EMILY BATTMER  
Staff Reporter

As spring approaches and campus starts coming back to life, some students have trouble enjoying the warmer weather with all the itching, sneezing and swollen eyes that accompany it.

Despite the misery of spring-time allergies, many students underestimate the severity of their allergies and don't seek medical attention.

Justin Puckett, family medicine physician and medical director at Complete Family Medicine, said that during the spring he sees a surge of people — including college students — looking for relief from seasonal allergic rhinitis. Puckett said without a doctor it can be difficult to determine whether patients have allergy symptoms, especially for younger patients.

The common cold is comparable to seasonal allergies because they share many of the same symptoms, Puckett said. The difference is with allergies, symptoms are persistent and won't go away as long as the allergen is present, and that means they can last for weeks or months.

"We know how crummy we feel when we have a bad cold, and folks who have bad allergies live with that day in and day out," he said. "They often underestimate the impact it has on their lives."

In addition to the daily discomfort people with allergies experience, Puckett said allergies can impact quality of life in other ways. Congestion and swelling might cause trouble sleeping and problems with oxygen intake at night, he said. Many patients with allergies don't feel like doing daily activities. Still, many people don't seek medical help for their allergies, and Puckett said many people suffering from them think that's just the way life is.

Even students who have never had problems with spring-time allergies might experience discomfort this spring. Puckett said plants grow differently in Kirksville than in other regions and when students come to Truman from different areas

— even places as close as Saint Louis and Kansas City — they suddenly could experience a huge allergy flare.

"Many students at Truman are not from this immediate area so by moving here, they are getting new exposure to different allergens and that can exacerbate symptoms," he said.

Freshman Elizabeth Arms has been dealing with mild, but persistent, allergy symptoms for as long as she can remember. She said she has noticed a change in her allergies since moving to Kirksville from Kansas City, but it's actually been for the better.

"I've noticed that they're actually not as bad in Kirksville," she said. "I have no idea why."

Arms said she spends the spring season dealing with an irritating runny nose and itchy eyes, but she hopes her change in location will help keep her symptoms mild. Unlike many people who suffer silently with allergies, she said she has seen a doctor about her symptoms and uses an over-the-counter nasal spray to manage allergy flare-ups. Still, she said she can experience sudden allergy attacks overnight, and even her mild symptoms can be persistent and annoying.

Senior Jeff Wang also suffers from allergy symptoms, and he said he said his lifetime battle with seasonal allergies has made spring less enjoyable.

"My eyes will get really red and itchy," he said. "It's pretty miserable."

His symptoms usually start during March, he said, and last through the beginning of May. Along with red, itchy eyes, he said he also has to deal with sneezing and mucus buildup.

Because allergies are common and a chronic problem, Wang said he sees them as a burden to face without doctor's visits. Over-the-counter medication doesn't do much to help, though, and sometimes he said his best option is to stay inside to avoid the pollen and the discomfort.

"It's hard to go anywhere comfortably, and it's no fun having red eyes when you're talking to someone," he said. "It's a very bad experience in the springtime."

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