

Environmental activists protest peacefully

BY KATHLEEN BARBOSA

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James Turner, former Truman State business professor and Presidential Sustainability Action Committee member who retired in 2009, is passionate about the environment, enough so to get arrested while protesting with the Tar Sands Action, an organization protesting the construction of the KeyStone XL oil pipeline from Canada to southern Texas.

Turner said the group was asked by the police three times to leave during the course of the protest, but refused each time. After the third refusal, police arrested him and 136 others at 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 1. During the two-week non-violent protest, 1,253 people were arrested in front of the White House. Turner was charged with disobeying a lawful order and was released later that day after paying a \$100 bond. Turner said he doesn't regret it and would do it again.

Despite this defiant attitude, Turner is insistent these protests be done in a non-violent manner because he believes protests are most effective when conducted with a peaceful demeanor.

The night before the protests, he and other protestors met, shared a meal and were trained how to politely refuse the police, he said. They were told of the demeanor they were expected to maintain and walked through the procedure they could expect the next day, he said.

This training helped to create a sense of camaraderie in the group, which prepared them to protest, he said.

Members of Truman's Environmental Organization on Campus also received similar non-violent training as a part of a protest they participated in during the Power Shift Conference in Washington D.C. in April, 2011 said sophomore Susan Zhu.

Zhu said the training taught her about how marches, protests and demonstrations are organized.

"If you walk past a big march it may look chaotic, but once you do a protest, you discover there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes," she said.

Zhu's training included instruction about crowd control — how to watch out for people who could cause poten-

tial problems and how to calm them. The goal, she said, was to keep the movement peaceful and non-violent.

Zhu took part in a protest at a British Petroleum gas station in Washington D.C. She said the purpose of the march and protest was to voice their disapproval of how the government was handling the oil spill. They chose to protest the gas station because it was a part of the company they were upset with, and choosing one station gave their protest a focus.

Turner said a strong focus was a reason he chose to participate in the Tar Sands protest. Permission to build this pipeline is granted through an executive order. Because it is not a piece of legislation, they didn't have to lobby an entire legislature and instead, their protest had a specific target, he said.

"This is a good time to start highlighting this issue in preparation for the 2012 elections when we should stop thinking of business as usual," he said.

Turner said he has never protested an environmental cause before, but was motivated to join because of a connection to the leader of the movement, James Gustave Speth, dean of the Yale School of Forestry. Speth leads the Tar Sands Action group, and is the author of one of the textbooks Turner used in the environmental policy classes he taught for 10 years. He said this is one of the reasons he was interested in this set of protests.

Oil and coal of Turner's main environmental policy focus areas and when he heard about the protests during the last week of August, he spent a few days investigating the movement. He said he joined the Tar Sands movement Sept. 1 in Washington D.C..

Sophomore Rachel Marler also marched in the protest of the BP station. She said her interest in the protest came from the emphasis on its non-violent characteristics.

"[Protesting] was something I associated with the hippie movement, the social change movement of the 60s and 70s, so I really wanted to experience that sort of thing," she said.

Marler said the experience was incredibly rewarding and she would protest again, as long as it was non-violent.



Courtesy Photo

James Turner, former business professor, finds non-violent ways to support environmental causes and express opinions.



Courtesy Photo

Turner is arrested by a Washington D.C. police officer after protesting with the Tar Sands Action on Sept. 1 outside the White House.

University research creates connection

BY MIKEY KARTJE

Staff Reporter

Psychology professor Fredrich Shaffer and his student sophomore biology major Evan Fluty only interact once or twice a week for psychology research, but outside the lab they have forged a strong friendship.

Shaffer said cultivating solid relationships between student researchers and their advisers, like the one he and Fluty share, helps to continue Truman State's research projects' success.

Fluty said he first heard about Shaffer's research during a class with him, where Shaffer welcomed anyone interested in the research group to attend an informational meeting. Fluty attended the first meeting, liked what he saw and signed up for one of eight two-hour shifts that occur throughout the week.

Shaffer said each group usually works one shift a week, which is possible because of the team's size, currently 34 to 35 members. Shaffer said this

makes it one of the largest research groups on campus. Fluty had no fears of becoming lost in the crowd because he already knew Shaffer would not allow it to happen, he said. Shaffer invited Fluty to his office after he joined the team, and when he stopped by, he noticed how friendly Shaffer is.

"It's been easier to get to know him than it has other professors," he said.

Fluty said he's grown much closer to Shaffer, and they occasionally spend time together outside class. Shaffer often checks on him and sometimes will invite him to go on walks. Shaffer shows a genuine concern for his academics, but also for his life outside the classroom and challenges him to think critically about every idea that he has,

Fluty said.

"He's definitely challenged me to rethink common ideas that I've taken for granted," he said. "... He helps me dig deeper and understand everything around me."

This inquisitive personality is what drives Shaffer to pursue the research on which his team is working.

Shaffer said he has been working with the research group for 34 of his 36 years at Truman, and that its size and success steadily have been growing since the beginning.

He said he makes a constant effort to maintain relationships with his pupils. Fluty said his effort makes being part of his team that much more enjoyable.

"I'd like to think of us as a nurturing environment and an ex-

tended kind of family," Shaffer said.

Senior psychology major Jordan Fuller is the team's lab manager, and said the students perform studies about the techniques of biofeedback, an advanced system that entails recording an aspect of a patient's health, such as the heart rate, and returning this information to the patient, along with techniques that can be used to improve the patient's condition. Such studies require knowledge of psychology as well as biology and other sciences.

Students have participated in the research team for all four years of their Truman experience, Shaffer said, because of the tight-knit environment that is created. He said this means students often receive four years of what he calls a high-impact experience — an experience that potentially could play a pivotal role in a student's life.

Because of the group's large size, more students can be allowed this experience. He said the most exciting part about the

team is the number of students who are willing to dedicate so much of their time and passion.

Shaffer said he not only is excited for the team's research success, but also for their opportunities to present their findings at international and national professional research conferences.

They usually attend a few conferences a year, outside of Truman's research conferences, Fuller said. All research, Shaffer said, is presented by the students, and he usually sits in the audience and watches them present.

"The students deserve the credit," he said. "All I do is help to set the tone for it," he said.

While they are able to present at such conferences, Shaffer said due to funding constraints only he and ten of the higher-level participating students are able to attend national conferences. Shaffer and about 10 students will go to a research conference conducted by the Association of Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback during the spring.

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