

# EDITORIAL

## Letter to the Editor

Truman is a special place. I love this university and its mission, and I've enjoyed every minute of my four years here. I've had the distinct privilege of serving the Student Association over the past four years, and I hope to encourage others to do the same.

This past Sunday, April 21, was my last Student Government meeting. It was certainly an emotional experience for me, but the meeting itself was also noteworthy. I have no idea what will be written about the subject or conveyed to other students, so I'd like to provide a positive and optimistic perspective.

Each spring the outgoing and newly elected Chairs and Treasurers of the Funds Allotment Council present a report to the Student Government regarding the slate of applications they received during the year. They publicly announce how

much money they spent as well as which organizations were denied funding, and why. In the past some organizations have used this time to appeal the decision, though to my knowledge the decisions of the FAC have never been overturned.

Things weren't quite as smooth this time. During their report, then-President Aaron Malin asked if the details of the slate had been made publicly available. It soon became clear that they had not, and that the last slate to be made available online was from the fall of 2011. Given that FAC allocated hundreds of thousands of dollars in that time, we all recognized the seriousness of the issue.

What followed was an intense discussion driven by passion for service on both sides. The important information to take away from our debate is that this was an innocent mistake; nobody intentionally

withheld information from the public. However, it is also a very serious issue that could have gone badly had it not been caught and corrected.

The biggest problem that we discovered was that FAC could accidentally violate their constitution without anybody noticing; that's on all of us. I commend everyone involved in FAC for the countless hours and hard work they put in for the University. They've since uploaded the missing slates. But the fact that nobody recognized something as severe as a lack of disclosure of hundreds of thousands of dollars from students is wrong, and must change.

The Student Government budget always faces intense evaluations. Each week The Index publishes a brief summary of the previous Student Government meeting, including the details of every

dollar the organization spends. This approach and level of scrutiny is welcomed by the Student Senators, because it guarantees transparency and accountability. Thus this method is perfect for the other student fee based organizations as well. It's our responsibility as students to hold these groups accountable, and we have to do whatever we can to prevent another mistake like this one. Students have the right to voice their concerns with how their money is being spent, but first the records must become available to them. The responsibility to meet this challenge is ours together.

Ryan Nely  
Truman State senior  
Former Student Association President

## Our View

### Campus event encourages compassion

A primary mission of Truman State is to establish a culture of encouragement, community support and acceptance of others' differences. This past Saturday, Truman continued to fulfill that mission by hosting the Special Olympics Missouri Spring Games.

We commend Truman for its ongoing commitment to being a community leader by encouraging understanding and compassion for disabled individuals. For the past six years, Truman has provided a place for those with special needs to gather as a community with hundreds of volunteers from Truman and across northeast Missouri. The support Truman shows for these athletes by giving them a place to compete should inspire and challenge students, faculty and community members to match the commitment of the University and volunteers who make the event possible.

Many people have participated in sporting events. They have had a chance to experience the camaraderie such activities build for a team and have had an opportunity to build confidence as an individual. The Special Olympics offers these same opportunities to those with disabilities.

By supporting events that benefit and uplift disabled people, such as the Special Olympics, we maintain and strengthen the core values of our University, bring openness and understanding into our community and express fundamental compassion for our fellow human beings.

Actively volunteering at the event isn't always necessary — sometimes simply attending the event and expressing support garners greater attention and advocacy for a cause.

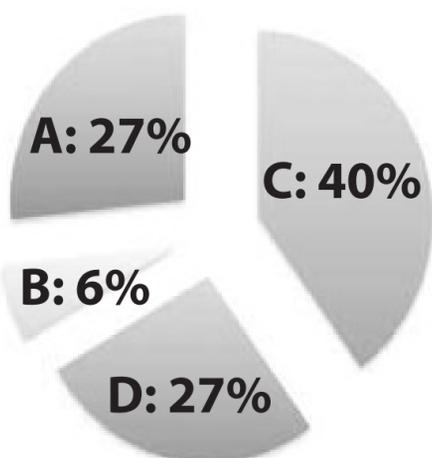
Community involvement is key to Truman's success as a liberal arts institution. We applaud the students and community members who have been active at the Special Olympics, and we encourage everyone within the Kirksville community to follow suit.

## Corrections

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please email [index.editor@gmail.com](mailto:index.editor@gmail.com), call us at 660-785-4449 or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo., 63501.

## Web Poll

Where do you get your health information?

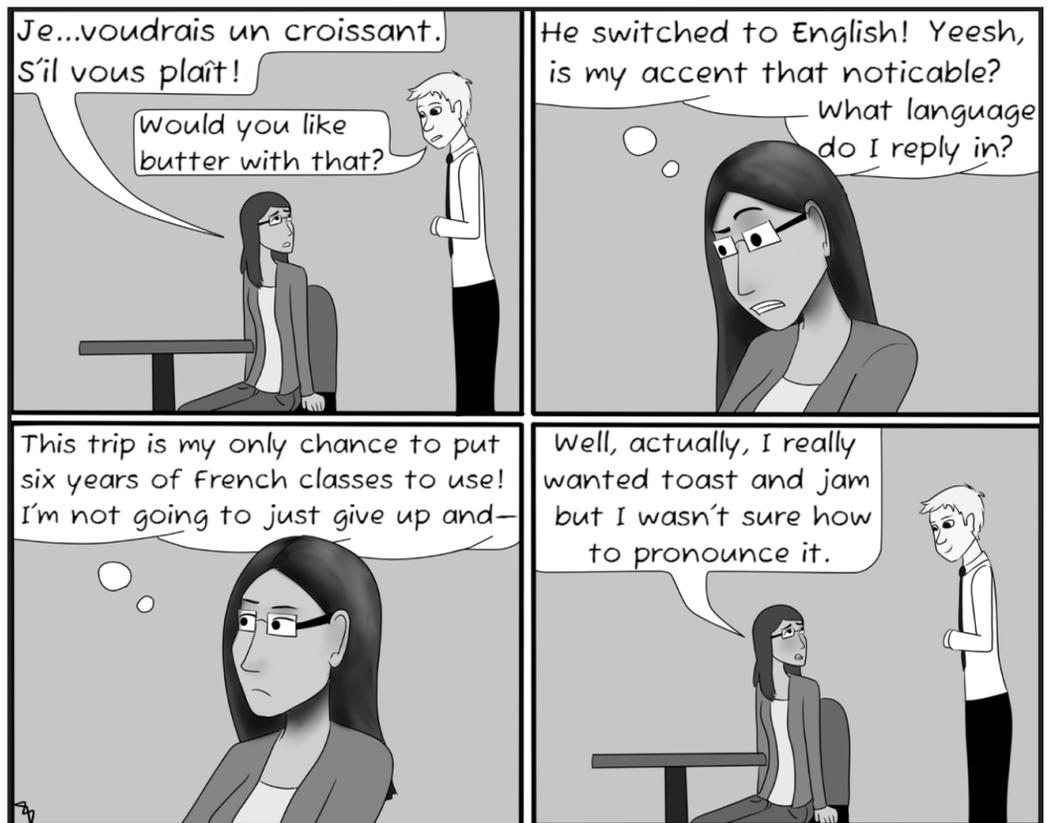


- A: Friends and family**  
**B: Student Health Center**  
**C: Online Resources**  
**D: Medical Professional**

Out of 15 votes.

## Cartoon

By Megan Archer



## All languages have merit



Andrea Trierweiler

I walked into my French class the first day of seventh grade to a room of 30 seats. After I sat down, eight chairs were filled. At a school of about 1,000 students, I was sure more people would enter the classroom. Nobody else did.

I didn't understand why my class was so unpopulated while Spanish classes had 20 to 25 students. The reason became clear when I overheard someone explain why she had chosen Spanish instead of French. "Why study French if you're never going to use it?" she said.

I was offended. I wanted to argue why my favorite class wasn't a pointless study, despite French not being as widely spoken across the U.S. as Spanish. Yet I had to question if I was wasting my time by studying French. Many classmates claimed they had chosen Spanish because their parents or guidance counselors strongly encouraged it instead of French. Even my own parents

mentioned how practical Spanish would be as I wrote "French" on my schedule sign-up sheet.

If the usefulness of a language is defined by how many people speak it in a region, then without question Spanish is most useful for Americans to learn, with 52 million Spanish speakers living throughout the U.S. as of July 2011, according to the U.S. Census website. But is this number really what defines usefulness?

There are benefits to studying a language besides being able to converse with native speakers. Through French classes, I probably learned as much about English as I did during English classes. The concepts of infinitives and conjugations were new to me before taking French, and I never had heard words such as "amiable" and "egotistical" until I learned their French equivalents. Studying French expanded my English vocabulary and gave me a better understanding of my native language's grammar, lessons I would have learned regardless of which language I selected to study.

Furthermore, learning any language goes hand-in-hand with learning about the cultures that speak it and history of those cultures. When I came to Truman State, I started studying Italian, a language even less practical than French in terms of its number of speakers worldwide — 68.5 million people speak French while 61.1 million speak Italian, according to [ethnologue.com](http://ethnologue.com). But along with vocabulary and grammar studies, the class provided me with tidbits about history, culture and fine

arts. Italian also is the closest language to Latin, according to [italianlanguagefoundation.org](http://italianlanguagefoundation.org). Thus, studying Italian can make it easier to recognize Latin roots of English words, increasing understanding of English vocabulary.

When it comes to choosing a language to study, what matters more than number of speakers is how motivated you are to learn it. Don't sign up for a language class because your peers or parents tell you to. Sign up for whichever interests you most. After all, while Spanish is a great language to know for people in the U.S., merely taking Spanish classes for two to four semesters is not enough to become proficient. Learning any language requires more time than three hours of class per week and more effort than cramming for tests. Becoming fluent takes constant practice and ideally, full immersion in a region that speaks the target language.

If you want to study Spanish, German, Japanese or Arabic, do it. You will learn about a culture other than your own and gain a better understanding of your native language. Whether you get the chance to speak the language is irrelevant if it's one you truly want to learn about. I might not get to say "Ciao, come stai?" during my everyday life in Missouri, but studying Italian still has been beneficial. Most importantly, taking that class led me to discover what I wanted to major in — and that is anything but useless.

Andrea Trierweiler is a junior Romance Language major from Columbia, Mo.

### Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the Editor-in-Chief, managing editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

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The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Letters containing personal attacks will not be published. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. They must be submitted by e-mail to [index.opinionseditor@gmail.com](mailto:index.opinionseditor@gmail.com) or on our website at <http://tmn.truman.edu/theindex>. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

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