



MLK Day should be used to serve



Adam Rollins

Government offices and schools being closed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day is an enormous waste.

That being said, I would like to applaud Truman State's Multicultural Affairs Center for taking advantage of the day off we are allotted for MLK Day. For the fourth year in a row the MAC has organized a service event to honor Martin Luther King Jr., which took place last Monday.

The MLK Collegiate Challenge is held to "break down barriers ... between students, faculty and staff participants and the community," and includes team building and reflection activities, according to Truman's calendar. This is a respectable and appropriate effort to encourage enthusiastic community activism, and a good way to honor the memory of Martin Luther King Jr.

But the MAC is one of a limited number of organizations, not only at Truman but in the community and nationwide, which encourage taking advantage of MLK Day to honor its namesake. The MAC was only accepting 200 student, faculty and staff volunteers this year, according to the calendar post, which is only about 3.3 percent of the student body, not counting University staff.

What did the other 96 percent of students, as well as most of the Truman faculty and staff, do to honor Martin Luther King Jr. Monday? Years of observation say most of them were sleeping in.

So I ask, what is the point of giving 5,000 students a day off right after the start of the semester if 4,800 of them are going to sleep half of it away and spend the other half hanging out with friends? It cannot be to honor Martin Luther King Jr., because I cannot see him becoming profoundly inspired by the thought of thousands of students doing nothing productive for a whole day.

It is not only to give those 200 active students, faculty and staff a chance to go out and serve the community. Those are the people who want to be involved, and they can all just as easily be involved during a Saturday.

And don't tell me it is a good opportunity for students to study, because that kind of thing is for finals week.

Government offices have the same problem. All offices in Kirksville close for observance of MLK Day, as do most other local government offices. We might as well have declared a nationwide day of apathy for anyone employed by or cared for by local governments. Meanwhile, everyone who works for private businesses has to work like any other day.

MLK Day is not an actual "holiday." It is not rooted in any religion or tradition. No one gets their family together to have a nice turkey dinner and remember good old Martin Luther King Jr., with the possible exception of his extended family. Give them the day off. Stop giving everyone else an excuse to waste time.

I know I am swimming against the tide by saying this, but it needs to be said nonetheless. I like having a day off too, but this isn't high school. All of us are here by choice. We are here to learn. In fact, we are paying to be here and learn. Maybe if everyone was using MLK Day to solve national hunger or homelessness, I would approve. Otherwise, let's not waste any more time or money.

Adam Rollins is a sophomore communication major from St. Charles, Mo.

Graduate school is a risky choice



Sarah Muir

As the economy continues to look shaky at best, college students increasingly are turning to postgraduate schools in hopes of securing their financial future. Enrollment in graduate programs reached new peaks during 2008 and 2009 following the recession, according to a Jan. 2010 New York Times article. Applications to graduate schools have continued to rise for the sixth year in a row, according to a Sept. 2012 New York Times article.

Graduate school sounds like a good way to secure a future well-paying job, but students should examine that option more carefully in this job market. Graduate and law schools can't guarantee those ideal jobs anymore, and on top of that they are charging more than ever to attend, causing students to acquire more debt and fewer benefits than expected.

If you're thinking of pursuing a professional degree, tuition to graduate schools has risen by 60 percent during the last decade, according to a May 2011 Learn Vest article. The number of employers

who offer tuition reimbursement for graduate degrees has simultaneously dropped, according to a March 2011 U.S. News and World Report article.

Potential lawyers don't have a good outlook, either. Law school tuition at public schools is increasing by 6 percent, which is well above the inflation rate, according to an Aug. 2012 U.S. News and World Report article. Only slightly over half of the law school class of 2011 had a full time job 9 months after graduation, according to a June 2012 Wall Street Journal article. The median salary for the 2011 class was almost a quarter lower than previous years, according to a July 2012 New York Times article.

M.B.A. students face similar obstacles, because median pay is down by 4.6 percent and average student debt is up by about \$25,000, according to a Jan. 6 Wall Street Journal article.

While it's true that employment is down in almost every field and pay has been cut throughout all jobs, the real financial danger of postgraduate education is the poor job market combined with the higher debt. Before the recession, the benefits of pursuing more education outweighed the costs because employment chances were high and tuition was reasonable, but as the pros shrink and the costs rise, continuing education is becoming a risky move. Individuals who pursue graduate degrees are now gambling whether or not they will be able to get a good job as opposed to being virtually assured to get one.

Underemployment probably is the biggest threat to graduate

students. For professional degree holders, 22 percent are classified as underemployed, according to a Feb. 2011 Forbes article. Only 65 percent of law school graduates actually have jobs that require a law degree, according to a June 2012 New York Times article. Graduates are underemployed, have debts piled up from school and have no job to show for it. Forgoing more school would have been more beneficial to them because they could have cut out the debt. The higher debt, lower pay, and lower chance of employment have combined to shift the reputation of postgraduate education from a safe choice to a risky one.

This is not to say it shouldn't be considered at all. The real problem is college students are rushing into postgraduate education because they want to protect their future from the recession, and the popular myth is that more education is the way to do it. In reality, college students should be looking more closely at these so-called "safe" career paths. They shouldn't run off to something as expensive as graduate school without evaluating the situation first. For some people, going to law school or getting a M.B.A. is going to be worth the risk if it's something they really want to do. However, students who go into it just because they think it will pay off in the future are in for an unpleasant surprise when they graduate with debt, poor job prospects and a degree they didn't really want in the first place.

Sarah Muir is a freshman political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

How did you spend your Martin Luther King Jr. Day?



"I had a lot of meetings and group projects."

Matt Lueken
Sophomore



"I had a Harry Potter movie marathon."

Meagan Banta-Lewis
Freshman



"I spent it catching up on homework."

Grace Horn
Freshman



"I did homework and thought about Martin Luther King Jr."

Justin Deters
Freshman

AROUND THE QUAD

Columnist responds to mother's college questions



Dan Mika

During 1271, Marco Polo left Venice to explore the unknown regions of Asia. During 1492, Christopher Columbus left Portugal, went the wrong way and accidentally began exploring the Americas. If my mother is to be believed, 2012 is a major year of exploration, when the illustri-

ous Daniel Mika left his home in search of knowledge in the wilds of rural Missouri.

I'm the middle child of a family of five children, but I was the first to move out. I can't possibly understand how hard it must be for a parent when their child leaves the nest until I have my own, but when I returned home for winter break, I couldn't help but notice that my mom has a completely warped view of what college life is. So, for your reading pleasure, here's a list, everything question-for-word, of statements and questions my mother has asked me about life away from home. I will answer them as sarcastically as possible and hopefully share some insight into the thought process of a mother whose child has left for college.

"Are you having deviant sex down there?"

I'll be honest, I smirked a bit when she said "down there." I have a rather childish sense of humor. But I wonder what she meant by "deviant." I'm going to assume that whatever she's talking about is unfit to run in this publication, so I'll just say I haven't engaged in deviant sex of any sort.

"How's your girlfriend doing?" She asked me this particular question in the middle of Christmas Eve dinner with many of my family members attending. The rest of the dinner was spent dismissing guesses as to what my imaginary girlfriend's name was.

"Have you tried any drugs?" If anyone from the Kirksville Police Department is reading this, you can stop drafting my arrest warrant. I don't intend to use any sort of illicit substance during my lifetime. However, my mom talks

about energy drinks like they're as dangerous as narcotics. If your parent is like this, do what I do. Tell them that you prefer cocaine to Red Bull for that late-night push.

"You look like you've lost weight" and "did you get the freshman 15 yet?" asked a few hours later.

I don't know what to make of that. "Is all of your underwear clean?"

I don't know why not doing laundry continues to be a collegiate stereotype. With the advent of pre-measured detergent packets, laundry has become teenager-proof. Also, consider this newspaper as a legal affidavit because I, Daniel Richard Mika, have never, nor will I ever wear dirty underwear. Nor will I ever turn them inside out to avoid having to do laundry.

But I'm being too sassy. When I returned to the nest for winter

break, I saw firsthand how hard it is for parents when their kids finally spread their wings and fly into this beautiful yet troubled world. It's possible readers will read what my mom said and think of their own parents. My mom's questions were embarrassing, sure, but it means she cares about me. If your parents ask similar questions, it means they fear for your well-being. As you're settling into spring semester, make sure to give your parents a call and let them know their child isn't about to die from starvation in a dirty residence hall.

P.S. Mom, if you're reading this, I'm sorry. Please don't stop sending me money.

Dan Mika is a freshman communication major from Mt. Prospect, Ill.