

# EDITORIAL

## Our View

# Special needs program fills important gap

When we think of an education degree, we tend to think of elementary or secondary education or an emphasis in subjects like English or mathematics. But with Truman State's announcement to take the special education specialization off hiatus, we wanted to voice our support of this decision.

Truman has a long history of producing quality educators from its roots as a teacher's college. The hiatus of Truman's special education program temporarily strayed from that heritage. We're excited for the return of the special education programs, and the opportunities for our students and the children they will educate.

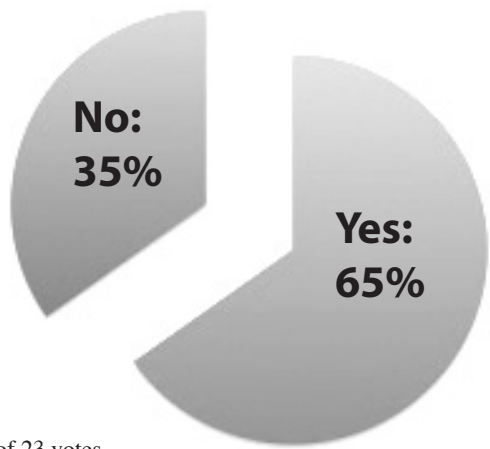
Too often, education tends to focus on the needs of intellectually midrange students. While this policy serves the greatest number of students, it tends to leave the needs of students on either end of the intellectual spectrum unaddressed. Students with learning disabilities are lost, while those whose intellectual abilities exceeding that of many of their peers are left bored and their time wasted.

The need for special education instructors is great. Typically, students with special academic needs require much more personalized, individualized attention. During 2011, Missouri's average student to classroom teacher ratio was 18:1, according to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Across Missouri, the average student to teacher ratio for those with learning disabilities was 11.6:1 for the 2008-2009 school year, according to the Thomas B. Fordham Institute's study about shifting trends in special education. Those with serious learning disabilities might require one-on-one instruction. Although this Truman program is small, graduating only six to 12 students per year, according to Dr. Janet Gooch, Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Education, these graduates are entering a rapidly growing field.

Truman students once again have the freedom to study education in the capacity they choose, be it elementary, secondary or education for those with special needs. With the reinstatement of the special education program, Truman is creating more opportunities for our students to make a difference.

## Web Poll

Do you think it is irresponsible to abstain from voting?



\*out of 23 votes

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## Corrections

- The photo on page 18 of last week's issue, was of freshman Curtis Secrest, not sophomore Garrett White.
- The art gallery opening in "Traveling exhibit visits Kirksville" on page 11 of last week's issue incorrectly listed the exhibit's start time as 7 p.m. It starts at 5:30 p.m.
- Last week's page 16 sports calendar incorrectly listed the Oct. 12 volleyball match as at home, when it was actually away at University of Nebraska-Kearney.
- Last week's page 16 sports calendar incorrectly listed the Truman mens soccer match at Iowa-Weselyan College as starting at 2:30 p.m. on Oct. 6, when it actually began at 2:00 p.m.
- Last week's page 16 sports calendar incorrectly listed last week's volleyball matches at home, when instead the matches were played at the Washburn University tournament.
- Nepalese student Ayush Agarwal, actually is a "he", not a "she" as stated in "Political unrest causes decline in Nepalese students" on page 1.

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.

## Letters to the Editor

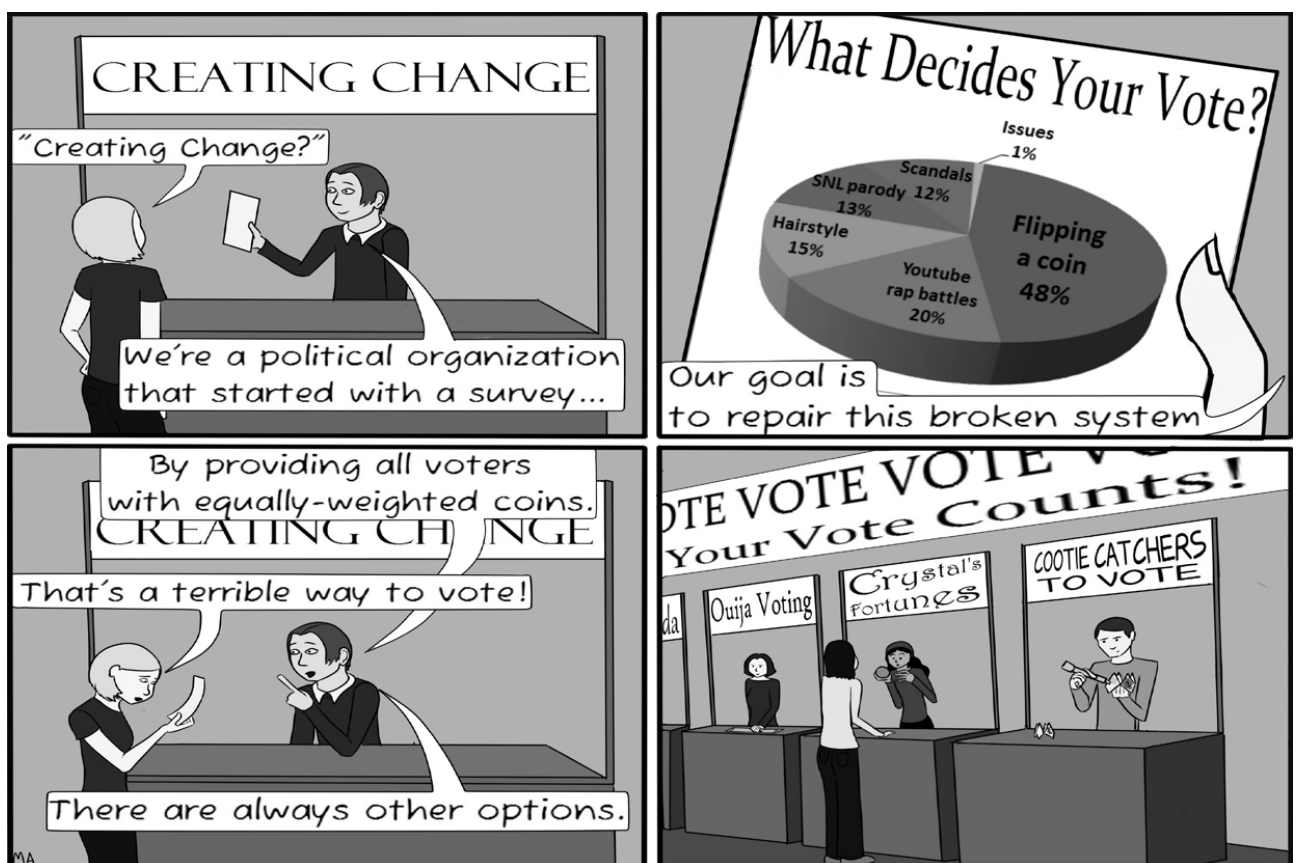
I've been driving through the Appalachian Mountains with my family during Truman's fall break. The Appalachians contain some of the poorest economies in the United States. The poverty here is often hidden from the view of the world inside of these giant mountain walls. Looking at the towns passing along the base of the giant hills, beat up trailers sitting too close to be comfortable; passing old and run down mines I swear I have seen in movies, with men still shuffling in and out covered in oil and dirt, I was feeling uncomfortable and I was beside myself. My family stopped in a McDonalds in the middle of these Kentucky coal towns. The young man taking my order said to me, with the most genuine of smiles, "yes it is!" What? I was expecting to receive a greeting more along the lines of "hello," or, "how may I help you?" Beyond confused and slightly concerned, I stared back for some sort of an explanation. He quickly caught on and explained, "Oh, I was just agreeing with your shirt. It is!" He exclaimed again with

the same compassionate smile. The shirt I was wearing says 'Life is Beautiful.' When I had pulled into the parking lot of that McDonalds 3 minutes before, I was happy about my travels and enjoying the view of our drive, but as we drove deep into these small and seemingly sad communities, 'beautiful' never immediately crossed my thoughts. In that moment, I learned such a valuable and awing lesson. I mean, Isn't that something else? In the middle of the poorest region in America, where a lot of things seem to be more deterring than anything else, life is still so beautiful. The lenses of this man are those in which I'd like to see my own world every single day, even when times may be hard. Be rid all hostility, negativity, cold shoulders, and hard hearts. Embrace the beauty by which we are surrounded.

Rachel Foster  
Truman student

## Cartoon

By Megan Archer



## Politicians are leaders, not saints



Robert Overmann

Would it bother you if President Obama had a cocaine addiction? It wouldn't bother me. Would you vote for a representative if he was a known adulterer? I would, provided he faithfully executed his role as representative. As long as these personal decisions have no effect with job performance, I don't particularly care how a politician lives his or her personal life.

Marion Barry, ex-mayor of the District of Columbia, is the district's highest rated politician, according to a July 2012 Huffington Post article. Barry, according to poll numbers, was an effective politician — he represented his district in a way the majority approved of. Barry also was infamously arrested for crack cocaine use and possession during a 1990 sting operation at D.C.'s Vista Hotel, according to the same article. Why should Barry's job performance be judged by a legal issue unrelated to his political post? Politicians are caught in personal scan-

dals on a regular basis. President Clinton was impeached and nearly evicted from office as a result of his affair with Monica Lewinsky. President Obama was forced to defend himself against photos which surfaced of him smoking marijuana during his youth. Florida Senator Bob Allen was arrested for soliciting an undercover male police officer for sex in a park restroom, according to a 2007 Orlando Sentinel article. Do these facts alone make these politicians poor leaders? I don't think so.

We all have "dirt" from our past. Perhaps not to the degree of a sex scandal or a drug arrest, but that doesn't determine our abilities to hold public office. No human being is a saint. We've all made decisions we aren't proud of, decisions that we'd prefer didn't become public knowledge. It isn't fair to expect inhuman perfection of our political leaders — in the words of the aforementioned Barry, "I didn't run to be pope. I ran to be mayor," according to an August Washington Post article.

Granted, there are moral failings that affect a politician's capacity to effectively hold a public office. Individuals with a history of chronic lying, cheating or stealing shouldn't be considered for public office. A history of white-collar crime is an obvious red flag when selecting a candidate for office — unlike adultery, casual drug use or other personal failings — this does pose a threat to the candidate's ability to faithfully execute duties he or she is sworn to uphold.

A compulsive liar obviously can't be trusted to be honest to constituents and

truthfully report matters of state. Nor can a potential candidate convicted of a violent crime be trusted — regardless of political ability, a politician who solves problems using violence is not fit for public office.

Be careful not to confuse "illegal" and "immoral" — the two are not synonymous. How many of us break a law on a regular basis? Even if the act might be as innocent as jaywalking, speeding or talking on a phone while driving, an illegal act in some states, we all innocently break the law. In cases of adultery, the issue should be between the candidate or politician and his or her spouse — not the general public.

Before a U.S. President takes office, he takes an Oath of Office. The wording is specified in Article Two, Section One, Clause Eight of the U.S. Constitution — "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

When you cast your ballot this November, vote for the candidate whom you believe will best execute the duties of the office for which he or she is running. Your vote should be based upon how well each candidate represents your views and their ability to govern effectively — candidates' personal lives and shortcomings shouldn't factor into that decision.

Robert Overmann is a junior English major from Cape Girardeau, 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, news 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.

### Letters Policy

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 email to [index.opinionseditor@gmail.com](mailto:index.opinionseditor@gmail.com) or on our website at [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com). 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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