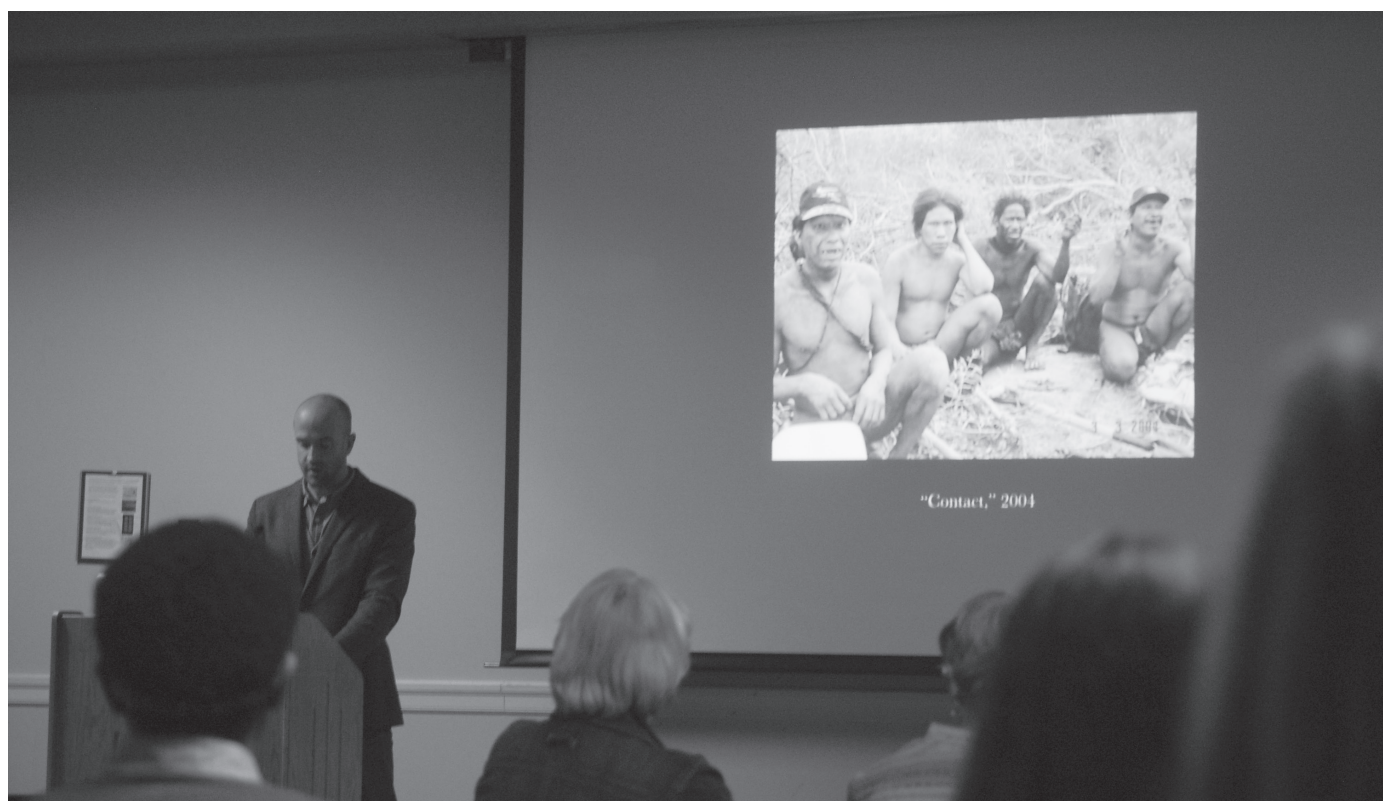


Guest professor lectures



Lucas Bessire, an anthropology professor from the University of Oklahoma, gives a lecture about the Ayoreo people of the Gran Chaco in Bolivia and Paraguay 7 p.m. March 27 in the SUB. Bessire has made two documentary films about the Ayoreo.

PROGRAM | Math and science program funding expires after five years

Continued from page 1
learn a chemistry minor.

Walston said SPECTRA has done studies to determine if the program is beneficial to students. He said when comparing students who have completed the summer program with a peer group who didn't go through the program, the SPECTRA students have better retention at Truman and better retention to science and math majors. The SPECTRA summer students earn more A's and B's than D's, F's and W's when compared to a peer group, he said.

Walston said another advantage is the SPECTRA program has encouraged the three partner community colleges to re-evaluate their science and math programs and courses, which makes it easier for students at these colleges to transfer to Truman and better prepares them to major in math or sciences at Truman.

"Transfer success in science is pretty low across the state," Walston said. "Things we can do to try and make transfer success easier is going to increase the number of students that transfer to Truman and increase the likelihood of them succeeding."

Garth said if SPECTRA cannot find another funding source, the summer and academic year program might continue, but students likely would have to pay housing fees and tuition for the summer program and there likely would be no more scholarships offered for the academic year program.

Plus/minus grading system changes progress

Student government passes resolution opposing changes to grading system

BY CASEY WRIGHT
Staff Reporter

The Undergraduate Council passed a resolution proposing the implementation of a plus/minus grading system at Truman State, while Student Government has passed a resolution opposing it.

Statistics professor Jason Shaw, Student Government Faculty Adviser, wrote and proposed the resolution. Shaw said his main motivation for the proposal of the plus/minus grading system is to provide an all-around assessment of students. He said Truman is known for its good assessment of students, programs and data. He said it's baffling to him that that's what Truman is known for but Truman has to lump students into five categories.

Shaw said his entire academic background has been at schools using a plus/minus grading system, so when he came to work at Truman and only had five possible

letter grades to assess students, he was irritated.

Shaw said faculty responses have indicated more in favor than opposed to plus/minus grading. He said the voices of opposition from faculty mostly have reflected faculty members not wanting to change the way they grade, and the argument is less about whether or not plus/minus grading is a good system.

Sophomore Matt Cooper, Student Government president, said the biggest thing he wants people to know about the plus/minus grading system is how it would affect students.

He said a lot of the debates Student Government has about this issue have been based on generalizations, and he said he thinks if everyone understands who they are as students, where they fall on the grading scale and what tends to help or hurt them, then students will be better able to form their opinion about plus/minus grading. Cooper

said Student Government proposed a resolution in opposition to Shaw's and passed it during their March 30 meeting.

Student Government sent a survey to all students March 19, and Cooper said the preliminary results from the survey showed about 75 percent of respondents are opposed to plus/minus grading, with 63 of that 75 percent strongly disagreeing with the proposed system.

A clause in Student Government's resolution said the change to plus/minus grading would reduce the number of 4.0 GPAs and deflate the GPAs of some of Truman's

best performing students. Cooper said with plus/minus grading, students who had previously higher GPAs tend to have their GPAs lowered because of the drastic difference it would make between an 89 earning 3.0 points per credit and a 91 earning 4.0 points per credit. But, with plus/minus grading, those grades would change to an

89 resulting in a B+, earning a 3.33. A 91 would result in an A-, which would earn a 3.67, thus deflating the grades of people currently achieving a 4.0.

Cooper said plus/minus grading could inflate the grades of students with lower GPAs.

"We need to look out for the people who are really working to get those 4.0s because I think on our campus, they are definitely represented," Cooper said.

Candy Young, political science professor and Faculty Senate member, said it will hurt students who are straight A students under the current system because they are likely to have some of their new grades be A- grades under the proposed system, which would result in those students having a slightly lower GPA. She said she thinks the plus/minus system will also end up differentiating between high B and low B students. Young said she thinks there is a big difference between a student who earns a low B and one who earns a high B.

At the Faculty Senate meeting March 27, plus/minus grading only was discussed briefly. The next time it will be discussed will be at their next meeting April 24.

75 percent of respondents from a student survey were opposed to plus/minus grading, and 63 percent of those opposed were strongly opposed



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