

Advice from the Editor-in-Chief



Emily Battmer

Change is a necessary evil. New beginnings can be scary, but beyond that fear lies opportunity if we are willing to grasp it.

When I was a freshman at Truman State two years ago, I made a pact with myself to embrace change, to face my fears, to grow as much as I could and to make the most of my time at this school.

As a naturally introverted, socially awkward person, I dreaded living with roommates I never had met before. I worried constantly about my ability to successfully trek across campus to unfamiliar classrooms, and the thought of introducing myself to a newsroom full of strangers practically gave me nightmares.

Despite my discomfort, I held myself to my promise. During Freshman Move-in Day 2011, I nervously complimented one of my roommate's Nikola Tesla poster, dubious we would have anything in common.

Nevertheless, I mustered my courage and enthusiastically introduced myself along with my entire life story, presented via scrapbook. Two years later, my freshman roommates are some of my closest friends.

Campus map in hand, I spent the entirety of my first two weeks at Truman completely lost. Now, I probably could walk blindfolded from Baldwin Hall to the Student Union Building to the Index News Office.

And when I feigned the confidence necessary to march myself to the newsroom my first week on campus, I never imagined after two short years, I would be taking charge as Editor-in-Chief.

I made good on my promise to embrace change, and now I'm going a step farther, making a promise to readers of the Index to implement a few changes of my own. We're rolling out our newspaper and web redesign, refocusing our content and learning as we go.

It's all still a little nerve-wracking. Change can be tricky to navigate, and I know we won't get everything right the first time. But it can be a risk worth taking, and I've learned to let my excitement outweigh my fear.

As you begin your journey at Truman, you probably will find yourself outside of your comfort zone more than once. I hope you choose to see that discomfort as an opportunity for improvement and to make the most of whatever comes your way.

As you spend these first few weeks acclimating to life at Truman — stumbling across campus, adjusting to your roommate's habits and getting involved — remember there still are plenty of seasoned Bulldogs, myself included, adjusting to changes of their own.

Change is a continual process, and we're learning right along with you.

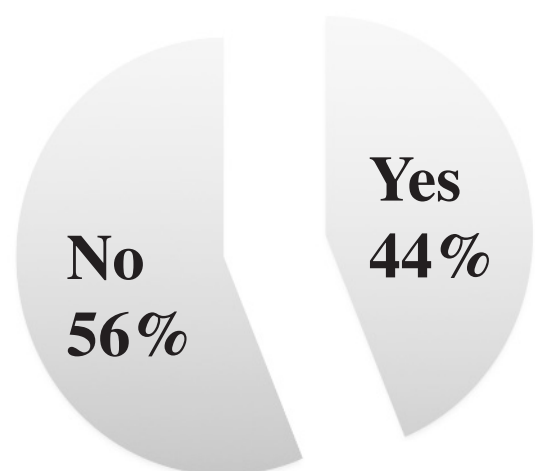
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Corrections

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please email 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

Did you know your freshman-year roommate before moving to campus?



Out of 16 votes.

Our View

First and foremost, freshman Class of 2017, we of the Index Editorial Board would like to welcome you to Truman State. You're about to embark upon an epic four-year journey, one which will take your life places you could not possibly predict.

You'll be creating a new life for yourself in sleepy Kirksville, where few parents are present and no immediate authority figures tell you how to live.

But perhaps most of all, you're about to meet bright, interesting individuals from all around the state, the country and the world. We implore you to embrace this diversity — those most different from yourself often can offer the most profound learning opportunities.

Undoubtedly, you will find many students who you consider similar to yourself. Many Truman students share

similar values — we are, after all, an academic community. We share a commitment to our studies and a sense of drive to create our own futures. It is our hope that you'll feel like a fitting part of this community.

However, you will find also that our interests and backgrounds vary widely. Some of us come from urban areas, some from rural areas. You likely will encounter students who speak different languages than you, and even some who were raised in different countries than yourself. Some of us are from wealthy backgrounds, while some of us aren't. Some of us are talented musicians, while others of us lack musical ability entirely and instead are much more excited about calculus and linear algebra.

One of the reasons we love Truman, and hope you will learn to as well, is

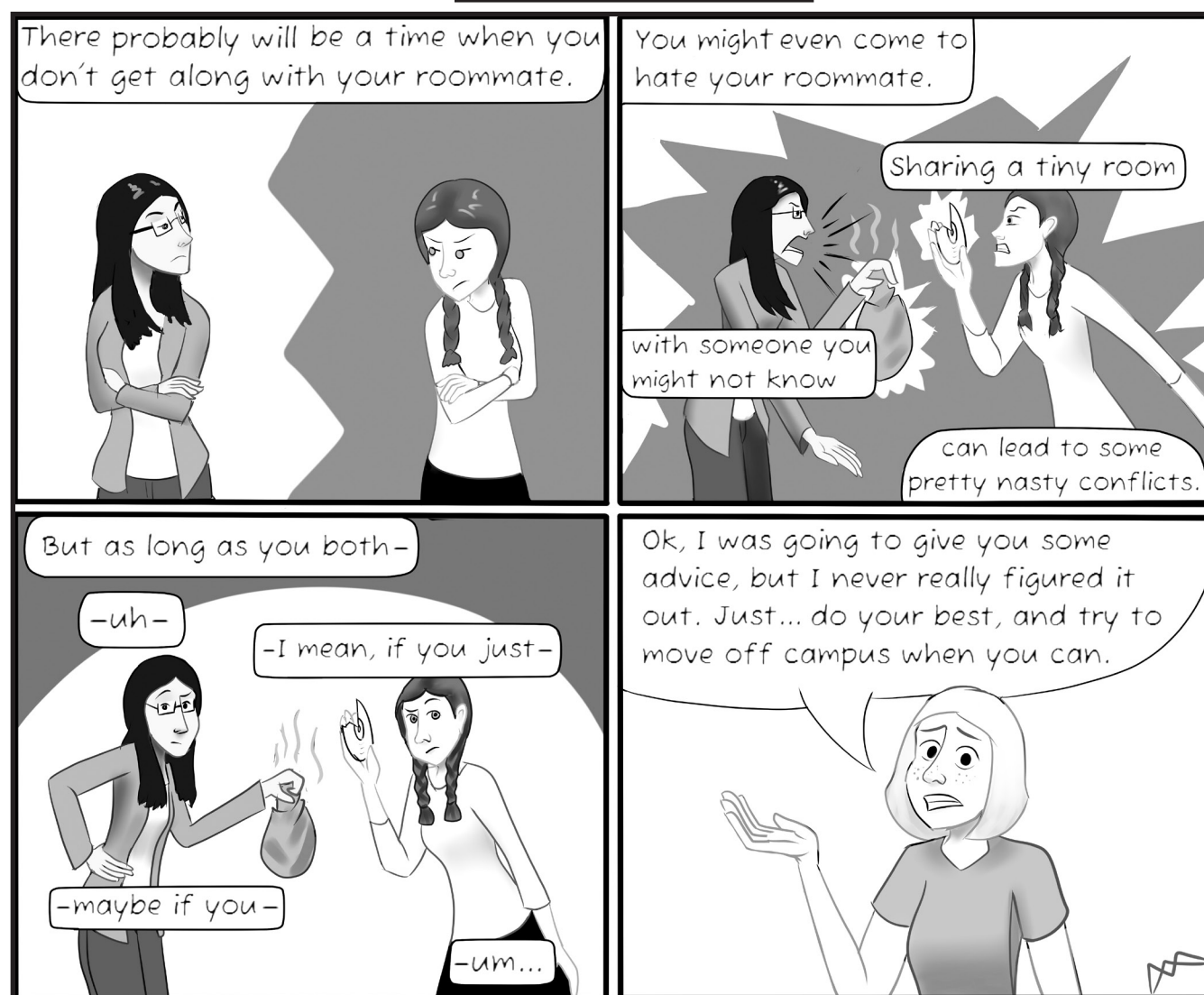
because of the great range of interests you can discover simply by conversing with your fellow classmates.

While we as students share similar goals, we likely are more diverse than your previous academic community. You might not understand some of your fellow classmates' interests, and you might not understand why some students think as they do. Instead of brushing your fellow students' differing values aside, make an attempt to understand why they value what they do.

Yes, we attend college for a degree. But you will learn quickly, we think, that college also is about broadening your interests, investigating the diversity of the world around you and experiencing the kind of ineffable learning that can come only from interacting with those most different from yourself.

Cartoon

By Megan Archer



Be a respectful roommate



Andrea Trierweiler

The first time I used a study bubble freshman year was not to study. It was 3 a.m. and I was curled up on a couch in Missouri Hall, wishing I'd brought a blanket or fuzzy socks. I wanted to return to my room and rest to write a speech for public speaking class. But I couldn't, because my roommate had decided to make out with her boyfriend while I tried to sleep.

Sharing a room can be a struggle. Forget academics, homesickness and time management — my biggest obstacles at Truman State have been roommates. Yet my difficult experiences taught me lessons about standing up for myself and how to be a good roommate.

Throughout the past two years, I dealt with a roommate who repeatedly brought her intoxicated boyfriend into the room after I'd gone to bed. I had roommates who constantly let their boyfriends spend the night without asking if I was comfortable with it. I put up with dirty socks, rotting fast

food, boxer shorts and feminine hygiene products strewn across the floor or amongst my personal belongings.

I once returned to my room to find a roommate's boyfriend sleeping there while she wasn't around. Another time she allowed him to stay the night when he was hacking up phlegm. One night I was "sexiled" — kicked out of my room so the pair could have "alone time." This incident was just as irritating as a roommate and her boyfriend getting lovey-dovey even when they knew I was awake.

I don't tell these stories to scare incoming freshmen. I tell them so students don't get caught off-guard by new roommates and so they can deal with roommate troubles better than I did.

My first response was to run away. I spent Saturday afternoons in the library so I didn't have to deal with an extra person encroaching on my space. I stayed late at work to avoid the stressors lurking behind my door. One evening I was pushed so far, the only place I could get peace of mind was in my car.

Several times each week I vented problems to my parents and friends, who always gave the same advice — stand up for yourself.

Yet week after week, month after month, I feared bringing my concerns to the surface would only cause conflict with my roommates. I buried the frustration they didn't know existed. When I didn't speak up, they assumed their actions were acceptable.

Little by little I worked up the courage, motivated by the reason I'm at Truman — I

didn't come here to be pushed around. I came here to learn.

When I thought of how much I was paying to study here, I realized my silence wasn't worth the cost. The problems with my roommates created stress and sleep deprivation that hindered my academic success. When I spoke up, most of the situations improved and I felt more at ease.

However, some situations didn't get better, and after fall of sophomore year I moved out. I couldn't put myself through the disrespect any longer.

Don't become the roommates I had. Always get your roommate's permission before allowing someone to spend the night. Ask roommates to give you privacy instead of demanding they go away, and never do anything that should be kept behind closed doors with your roommate present.

In other words, use common sense. Roommates deserve respect from one another and a comfortable place to call home. It's especially important for freshmen, because that tiny cube of white walls and lofted beds is the only space they get to make their own.

I came to college expecting to learn English, languages and critical thinking, but I realized some life lessons come with the package. It took three semesters to learn how to fight for myself, but now I understand why having a roommate is a pivotal part of the college experience.

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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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