

# Professor shares drive for research

BY REBECCA SMITH  
Staff Reporter

For the academic, research is a necessity for publications and funding, but for some it is more than that — it is a way of life and as essential to the quest for knowledge as breathing is to life.

Biology department chair Michael Kelrick is one such professor, and said if he is not involved with research of some sort, his “research-self” dies.

Kelrick said the most important aspect of research for him is its application. This was one of the primary reasons he chose his graduate school and pursued ecology, he said.

Research is nothing new for Kelrick. He said he has been conducting research with undergraduate students since his graduate school days and for all 27 of his years at Truman State.

Because his career has taken him in a different direction during the last few years, first as the interdisciplinary studies director and now as the biology department chair, Kelrick has not been able to conduct much research with students but has continued his own individual studies.

Physaria filiformis, known as the Missouri bladderpod, is the focus of Kelrick’s research. The bladderpod is an endangered plant in Missouri, according to the Missouri Department of Conservation.

“I have been working for a long time on a population dynamic model, which is a mathematical approach to describing the population fluctuations of the Missouri bladderpod,” Kelrick said. “I have worked on this plant for years in order to provide land management plans.”

Kelrick said he is a biologist consultant who works with the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Park Service. He helps these regulatory agencies monitor the bladderpod.

There are numerous ways Kelrick’s research is disseminated. Kelrick said some of it is in the government grey lit-



erature, which government scientists review. His research is published in peer-reviewed journals and periodic reports to regulatory agencies.

The research Kelrick wants to start with students involves the population dynamic model and requires a skill set that is somewhat atypical for biology students.

“The student has to have a fairly serious math background, has to enjoy statistics, and have some programming background ... and learn the biology involved,” Kelrick said.

Kelrick currently has one student in the incipient stages of a research project. They are reading papers, and Kelrick said if the student retains his interest of the subject matter, he could begin on the specialized software after about a year.

This long-running project is not the extent of Kelrick’s research, as he also teaches field biology courses during the summer session with fellow biology professor Chad Montgomery.

These courses involve identifying a conservation issue, taking students into the field and collecting data. Kelrick said this has been a good way for him to maintain his research and offer students authentic research experiences.

“This is something that I move toward, as my own ability to perform research has shrunken because I am a full-time administrator,” Kelrick said. “Working with students and leveraging their effort, their curiosity and their willingness to be engaged intently in the field for two and a half weeks allows you to get some really cool stuff done.”

Montgomery and Kelrick said they meet when the fieldwork is completed and write up the results of the course so it can be considered for publication.

Kelrick said interdisciplinary research and student-based research are important to him. He said the hands-on research experiences he had as an undergraduate transformed him.

“Having those types of hands-on experiences ... those are the things that really stick with you,” Kelrick said. “You can go back and look at coursework and the books, but nothing can replace those types of experiential learning experiences that are really once in a lifetime.”



Submitted photo  
Biology professor Michael Kelrick poses with a frog during summer 2012 in the Bighorn Mountains while on a field ecology course. Kelrick said he has been conducting research since graduate school and all of his 27 years as a professor at Truman State.

# Second language presentation draws crowd

BY KRISTEN WOMBLE  
Staff Reporter

The room was packed — all the chairs were filled and people were standing along the wall. With less than five minutes until the presentation was set to start, interested listeners still were crowding through the door.

During Jan. 23 in the SUB Activities Room, Michigan State University professor Bill VanPatten gave a presentation about second language acquisition. The presentation originally was going to take place in the SUB Alumni room, but because nearly 300 people attended, more than three times the expected number, it was moved to the Activities Room. Students and faculty from Truman State as well as teachers from the Kirksville community made up the audience.

Timothy Farley, French professor and a Masters of Arts in Education speciality director for foreign languages, said VanPatten is a leading researcher in second language acquisition and presents his research at scholarly conferences to an audience of teachers and nonspecialists in second language acquisition. He also teaches French and Spanish at Michigan State University, is a member of three faculties there and is in charge of the Romance language program and the doctoral program for second language acquisition studies, Farley said.

Farley was included with the project. Together, with the help of many other faculty members at Truman, Farley and linguistics professor Sally Cook began the process to bring VanPatten to the University. Cook and

Farley wrote a grant called the Vision Initiative grant to the School of Arts and Letters with the idea of bringing innovation to the curriculum, Farley said.

“The issue with second language acquisition understanding is it’s not an understanding you can get on your own,” Farley said.

Farley said second language acquisition is its own academic field. It is an interdisciplinary field because it integrates theoretical linguistics with other branches of linguistics and includes cognitive psychology and learning theory.

Cook said the event was so crowded because the audience was comprised of students and faculty from many different disciplines at Truman, such as cognitive psychology, speech communication disorders, linguistics, lan-

guages and education.

“It really was cross-sectional — it wasn’t focused on a narrow group of people at all,” Cook said.

Despite the room change, Cook said she thinks VanPatten and his presentation were well-received.

She said the manner in which he presented made it easy to forget he was dealing with very complex information.

She said she thought he made it accessible to a wide variety of people in the room, and said it didn’t take a Ph.D. in linguistics to appreciate what VanPatten was saying.

“It was interesting,” sophomore Jenna Eschbach said. “It’s a field that we’re still learning about, and you can always learn something new about it.”

## Bus Ride to Justice

While it is true that institutional slavery was ended in the U.S. during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, civil rights for all Americans has been a long time coming. Fred Gray, was only 24 years old, not much older than you, when he defended Rosa Parks in Montgomery, AL. Mr. Gray, now age 83 shares this story Sat. Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. in Baldwin Auditorium.

According to the website <http://www.endslavery-now.com/> world-wide estimates suggest that as many as 27 million people are enslaved today! Taking Mr. Gray’s, Mrs. Parks’, and Dr. King’s example of civil disobedience as your inspiration, depict a contemporary violation of human rights and present your campaign for its abolition.

### Art, Essay, and Oratory Contests

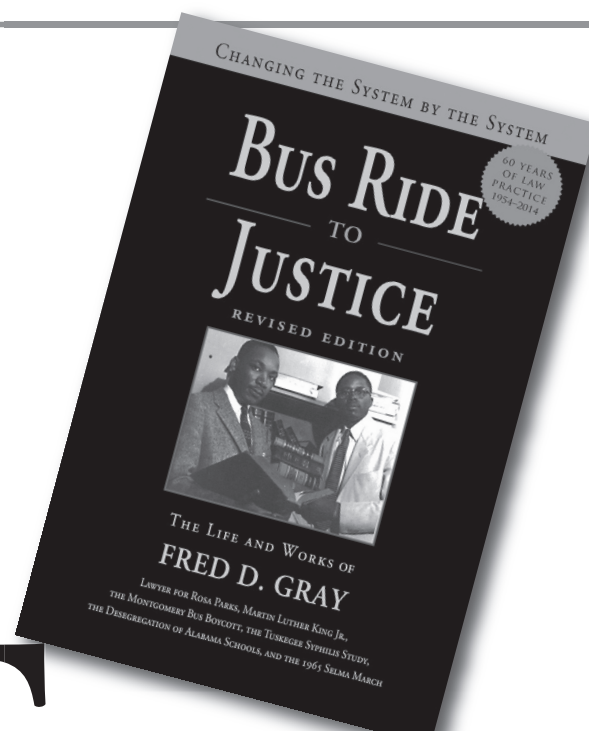
Fred & Ethel Schwengel established the Lincoln Contests in art, essay, and oratory to pay tribute to Abraham Lincoln. This semester the collegiate essays will be judged by Professor Monica Barron and the speeches by Professor Barry Poyner. The art contest will be judged by Professor Rusty Nelson.

By Feb. 28, submit a 1000-1500 word, 3-5 page essay in response to the prompt to Barry Poyner, Barnett Hall 1110. Provide a list of “works cited” as appropriate. On a cover sheet, provide contact information, and clearly indicate if entering the essay or oratorical contest, or both. Finalists in the Oratorical Contest will deliver their speeches before the National Communication Association Student Club later in the semester. Communication Club members will assist Dr. Poyner in judging. Essay and Oratory Prizes for 1st and 2nd places will be \$200.00 and \$100.00, respectively.

For the art contest, entries should be submitted to Rusty Nelson, OP 1221 by Feb. 28 and observe the following criteria: artwork of any media is acceptable, traditional or digital output/projection - 2D and 3D. No larger than 18 x 24” for 2D work and 3ft in the round for 3D work. Projected work should be formatted for 16:9 screen ratio. Winning art will be added to the Schwengel Lincoln Collection in Special Collections at Pickler Memorial Library. Art Prizes for 1st and 2nd places will be \$200.00 and \$100.00, respectively.

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Let’s get slavery out of our system.  
Find out how your life can be used to change the world.  
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# FRED GRAY

Lawyer to Rosa Parks and  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Saturday, February 8, 2014  
Baldwin Auditorium • 7 p.m.  
Admission Free

Sponsored by Ekklesia Campus Ministry  
[ekkleisia.truman.edu](http://ekkleisia.truman.edu)

Mr. Gray will also preach at  
Kirksville Church of Christ  
Sunday, February 9, 11 a.m.  
110 Pfeiffer Ave.