

Stress can be manageable



Sarah Muir

Going from a summer of relaxation to a full schedule of classes would increase anybody's stress level, but the key to having a successful semester is not letting it get the best of you.

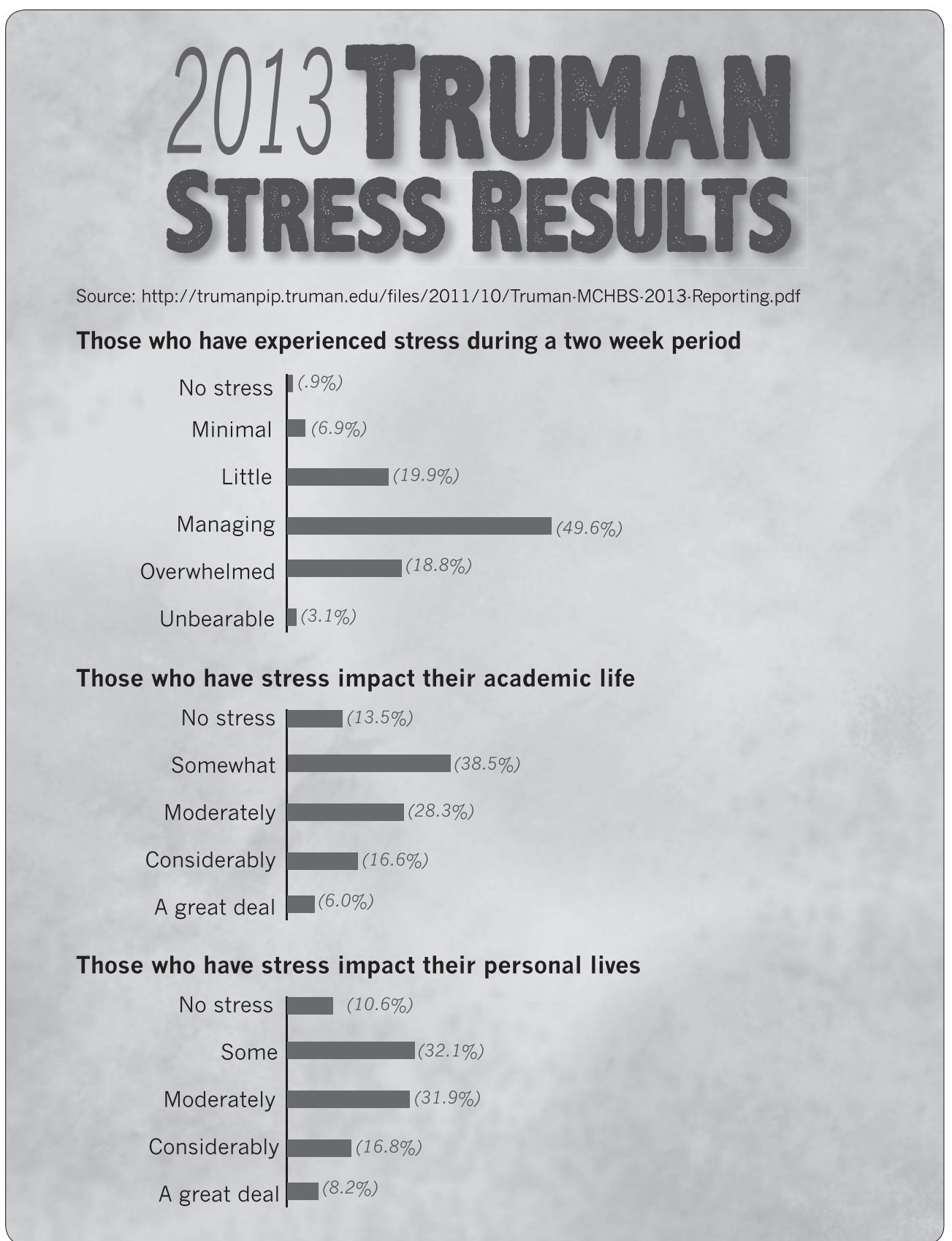
Truman State students are prone to stress, according to the 2013 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey. The survey indicates almost 22 percent of Truman students report overwhelming or unbearable stress. More than 16 percent of students also report stress has considerably interfered with their academic life, and nearly 90 percent say stress has interfered with their personal lives to some extent.

No mistake about it — Truman can be a stressful place. That doesn't mean stress has to rule your life. Too much stress is unhealthy and unsustainable, and learning to manage stress at the beginning of the semester will be a lifesaver once finals week rolls around.

The first key to reducing stress is learning to place less pressure on yourself. It's great to be motivated to do well and maintain a high GPA. However, grades are not more important than personal well-being. A grade on one assignment, paper, test or even class will not impact the rest of your life. Learn to let go of little things instead of stressing about them. A good test is to ask yourself if this thing will matter next year. If it won't, don't spend too much time worrying about it.

Even if you have this mindset, it won't change the fact that there will be weeks that seem impossible. This is where good time management becomes your friend. Good time management means minimal procrastination and effective working periods. Figure out what method of time management works for you and stick with it. One of my favorite tricks is writing a weekly to-do list that breaks down everything I have to get done. I also use the free web app "Self Control," which makes you unable to reach the websites you want to avoid while working, to block myself from getting on Netflix when I'm supposed to be studying and challenging myself to finish assignments in certain time periods using a timer.

Good time management is only possible if there is enough time to get things done. Be careful about committing to too many things and taking on too much at once. Overextending yourself can only end badly. Collectively, we need to rid ourselves of the idea that being busy all the time is a positive thing. Until then, don't feel guilty about having down time. It doesn't mean you're not doing enough — it means you understand the limitations of a 24-hour day.



Stress is mentally exhausting and so is being a student, so pick up a relaxing activity to fight the exhaustion. Yoga is a good way to stay healthy and relaxed and the Student Recreation Center usually offers classes. Even if one doesn't fit into your schedule there are many free yoga tutorials online. Meditation is another way to relax and reduce stress. Or maybe you're more like me and prefer to relax by watching TV or listening to music. Whatever it is that relaxes you, be sure to do it often.

Stress is going to happen and a little stress is a good motivator. Don't let it be more than that. Find what combination of tips works for you and be on your way to a better semester whether it's your first or your last.

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

AROUND THE QUAD

What was the best part of your summer break?

Seeing the Chicago Art Institute.

Alex Wennerberg
Senior



I worked as a camp counselor at a camp in Iowa.

Sam Moeller
Junior



I went home to Germany and went to France.

Kerstin Berndt
Freshman



I worked on my car and wrestled.

Dustin McClintock
Sophomore



Truman and Hogwarts are closer than you think



Anna Grace
Managing Editor

Let's face it, a college acceptance letter is as close as you'll get to a letter from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Although the average college experience will have less cool magical candy, more firewhiskey and fewer battles with the most evil wizard that ever lived, Harry Potter and company's Hogwarts experiences are full of lessons for the college student.

Firstly, professors. Just like at Hogwarts, there is a spectrum of professors throughout college that spans from "can you be my uncle or something" to "likely to torture you for not turning in homework on time." Some professors will be like one of Hogwarts' best, Professor Remus Lupin. They really care about the students and subject, know their stuff,

give lots of real life lessons and make time for meeting one-on-one. Take all the classes you can with these professors and meet with them during office hours, even if you don't need help vanquishing dementors.

The next professor you might — but hopefully won't — encounter is the Professor/High Inquisitor Dolores Umbridge type. Take a deep breath — this professor will make an example out of you for talking during class, use Blackboard all the time and never tell you when projects are due, make you send in assignments during a long weekend or a snow day and even ban you from Quidditch. You can fight this professor, but it might not be worth it. Usually the best bet is to power through and let the professor's evilness catch up to them. Hopefully they won't join the government and put a price on your head.

Then, there's the Severus Snape professor. They make you do the reading and count against you for poor spelling on tests. If you miss a day of class, you're a little frightened to come to the next one. But then, it's the end of the semester and you realized you learned something — their difficulty was for a reason! And at the end of your college story, they'll write you a great recommendation or give you a meaningful compliment and suddenly you're bawling your eyes out, having

finally seen they were a hero all along.

Harry and Ron were high school-aged, and obviously in college we are *much more emotionally mature* and able to be *super cool about relationships like adults* but they still had some struggles in the love department we can learn from. Harry's first real fling is with Cho Chang, and though he misses his chance with her at first, he ends up getting to have an awkward, tear-filled sort-of relationship with her later. Ron and Lavender Brown were quite the thrill ride. Ron wanted someone to make out with and ended up getting a necklace that said "My Sweetheart." The main warning to take away from these pairings is what a small world Hogwarts and college can be. Harry still had to see Cho in the Great Hall and on the train, and Ron still had to live in the same Hogwarts house as Lavender. Think about what it will be like running into that girl or guy you took to Sweet Espressions and never called back when you're wearing a towel on the way to the community bathroom.

However, after these flings, Harry and Ron ended up with girls they had been friends with and fought beside through a wizarding war. Which goes to show you, it's usually the relationships with people you can stand to study with for hours, make fun of and maybe even save the world with that end up lasting.

For study skills, there is no better resource than the intelligent and hard-working Hermione Granger. She read the assigned books before the year even started, took excellent notes — even in the classes where everyone else fell asleep — made study schedules for herself and friends, was never afraid to raise a hand during class, spent an almost unreasonable amount of time in the library and studied topics outside of classwork. Try to adopt just two of these skills and you'll be better off.

The most important thing about Hermione, though, was her willingness to help her friends with their work. If you're a Hermione type and are a little annoyed this article is so long and you can't get back to studying sooner, consider sharing your wonderful talents of school domination with some of your friends. And if you have friends like Hermione, make very, very sure they feel appreciated because, like Harry or Ron, you would probably be dead without them.

Sadly, there are no broomsticks, Skiving Snackboxes or Quick-Quotes Quills in college. But if you remember the wisdom from the world of Harry Potter your college experiences, too, will end with an "All was well."

Anna Grace is a junior visual communications major from Albany, Mo.