

Communication professor Diane Johnson to retire



BY DAN MIKA &
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Communication professor Diane Johnson will retire at the end of the fall 2014 semester after more than a decade working as a professor at Truman State and nearly a lifetime trying to improve the country's libraries.

Johnson has been semi-retired since 2012, which has allowed her

to explore other activities on campus and in the community while still working as a professor.

Johnson said she has been active in Victim Support Services, Trinity Episcopal Church, Kirksville Master Gardeners, Faculty Senate, honors society Phi Kappa Phi and the Advertising and Public Relations Club. She said she'll continue to volunteer around town long into her retirement.

"I think it's important to give what you can give because we're all in this together and we're all important in each other's lives," Johnson said.

Johnson said she dropped out of college to volunteer with social action programs like "Meals On Wheels." She said she found herself volunteering in Nebraska and started working for her county library's Bookmobile, stocking the vehicle with books to match local teachers' lesson plans.

Johnson said she eventually returned to college, earning a master's degree in library science. From there, she said she spent time as a librarian and as a public relations specialist for libraries in Maryland, Minnesota, Washington and Colorado. She said she decided to pursue her doctorate in communication after spend-

ing time teaching fellow librarians to deal with aggressive patrons.

Johnson eventually came to Truman's communication department during 2001, when communication professor Andrew Klyukovski told her about an opening. Klyukovski said the two studied together while pursuing their doctoral degrees at the University of Missouri-Columbia and he thought she would do well in the department.

Klyukovski said while his teaching style differs from that of Johnson, she always has been supportive of him and her colleagues. He said this compassion comes from her enjoyment of learning and education.

"With Diane, I would never be able to tell whether she likes more to learn or to teach," Klyukovski said.

Communication department chair Jay Self said Johnson is a sincere person with a passion for academia. As he first started to get to know her and began to learn more about her life, he said he realized, as he got to know Johnson, that he was lucky to work in a department staffed with kind people like her.

Self said Johnson's habit of going above and beyond for her colleagues manifested itself in many ways. He

said he used to have another colleague visit him in his office and often get into heated debates. Johnson, whose office was right next to Self's, would walk to the communication department office and call his office phone, giving him a reason to ask his colleague to leave.

"I would pick up the phone and say 'Hello?' and she'd say, 'Yeah, this is Diane. Just want to talk to you so so-and-so gets the idea that you have work to do and should leave,'" Self said.

That compassion, Self said, is why Johnson has been a favorite of students for the past 12 years.

Junior Rowen Sears said he met Johnson during his Truman Week class during 2011. He said she has been deeply supportive of him from the moment they met, serving as a mentor throughout his college career.

Sears said Johnson cares deeply about her students and worries about them. When he received a minor eye injury while handling chemicals in a biology class, he said Johnson took it upon herself to check in regularly with him to see how he was recovering.

"She said it's the grandma in her," Sears said. "She's caring, she's nurturing, she really wants all of her students to succeed, and I love that about her."

MASTERS | Truman State graduate students enrolled in the Masters in Arts and Leadership program now can apply time spent in the Peace Corps for internship credit

Continued from page 1
the Masters International program.

Young said Truman is a top school in the nation for producing Peace Corps volunteers, and the Masters International program gives students who are considering serving in the Peace Corps another option.

"It's a great opportunity," Young said. "They'll be much better prepared when they enter the Peace Corps. It's a perfect fit."

International Student Advisor Bri Rhodes said she encourages students who want to serve in the Peace Corps to complete the Masters International program because it is a faster way for them to obtain a masters degree while also serving abroad for the Peace Corps. She said she served in the Peace Corps from 2008 to 2010 in Cambodia and completed a masters program after returning to the U.S. Rhodes said she would have earned her masters a year earlier if she had instead completed the Masters International program.

"What's great about a Masters International program is you get that Peace Corps experience, which is really great for you both personally and professionally," Rhodes said. "Serving in the Peace Corps is important because ... when you're in the Peace Corps, you're in a community for two years, and you really become part of that community."

BACON | Kraft's Kirksville bacon line is set to close and consolidate to Ohio during spring 2015, which will result in the elimination of 275 local jobs

Continued from page 1

level, bring in another production line to retain some of the jobs that will be lost because of the closure. Chrisman said Kraft is the largest employer in Kirksville, so there is some concern about how the lost jobs and wages could affect Kirksville's economy.

"One of the things that Kraft knows is that they have an available work force here that knows the system and knows a lot of the machinery," Chrisman said. "That speaks for itself — the great quality of workers out there — and so we're just trying to see if we can do anything incentive-wise to help maybe push it over the edge."

Chrisman said her office is working closely with Kraft management during this transition. She said K-RE-

DI won't know for sure what the economic repercussions of this change will be until the beginning of 2015. She said by then, Kraft will have developed a more specific timeline of how they will go about consolidating their lines, and her office will know if Kraft will bring new production lines to Kirksville.

"We are really kind of in a wait mode," Chrisman said. "We are planning and trying to have the best outcome."

Chrisman said K-REDI will work with the state to try to attract other companies to Kirksville to fill the gap.

"There are multiple educational opportunities available for retraining and there are, in our region, some other manufacturing jobs available through some of the other industries," Chrisman said.



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STATE UNIVERSITY

Truman State University is seeking comments from the public about the University in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The University will host a visit March 2 & 3, 2015, with a team representing the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. Truman State University has been accredited by the Commission since 1914. The team will review the University's ongoing ability to meet the Commission's criteria for accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the University to:

Public Comment for
Truman State University
The Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle St., Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1411

The public may also submit comments on the Commission's website at

www.ncahlc.org.
Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing.

All comments must be received by **February 2, 2015.**



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