

[Our View]

From provost to president

Truman State celebrated the announcement of a new interim president Saturday. The Board of Governors announced Susan Thomas will act as interim University president when current University President Troy Paino leaves this July. Thomas currently serves as executive vice president for academic affairs and provost for the University and was appointed to that position in 2015.

While the Index Editorial Board congratulates our incoming interim president, we also ask the Board of Governors to consider the appointment of all faculty positions with the same scrutiny and high expectations they demand when searching for a University president.

Upward mobility is prevalent in the faculty here at Truman, which adds to the overall diversity of backgrounds among our leaders. Several of Truman's past presidents have served in other roles at the University. Paino was the provost at Truman for two years before being named University president in 2010. Richard J. Coughlin acted as dean of libraries and museums before his appointment to interim provost from 2010-12. Now Coughlin will serve as interim executive vice president for Academic Affairs and provost when Thomas moves from those positions to interim president.

The search for a University president can take months or sometimes even years. Whoever fills the position must have a background in educational leadership, long-term planning skills, be business savvy and have the ability to relate to students.

While the presidential seat at any University comes with high expectations and requirements, we should not forget to apply those same high standards to other campus positions. Interim presidents have the same power as the presidents they temporarily replace. Selecting a provost also is not a decision that should be made lightly. The provost plays a role that directly affects the current well-being of our University and the future of our campus. And because there is such a great opportunity for upward mobility at Truman, every faculty position, no matter how small it seems, should be filled by someone who shows promise for a position higher up in the school.

Some skills the Board of Governors looks for in a president don't necessarily come naturally. Opportunities for educational leadership take time to come by and require a strong initiative to see a goal through to completion. Opportunities such as these can open up at the professor level. Several professors have taken the initiative to lead study abroad programs, taken a position on faculty senate, and suggested changes to University policies that ultimately were accepted and put into Truman's mission statement.

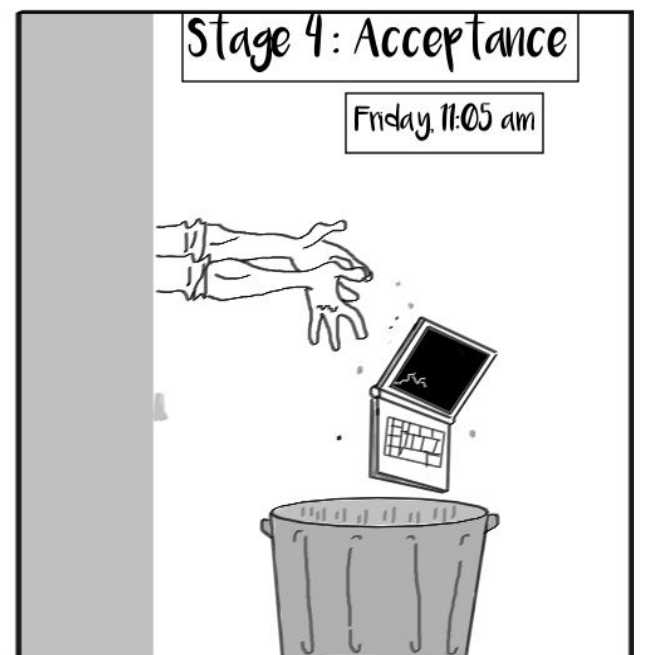
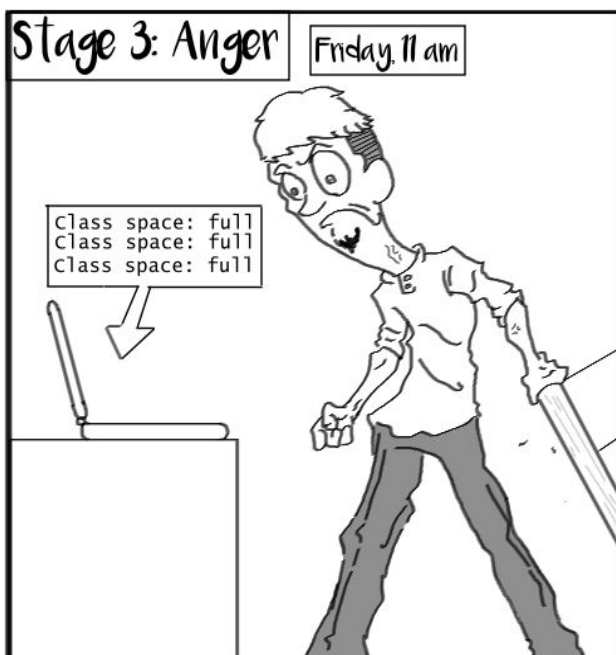
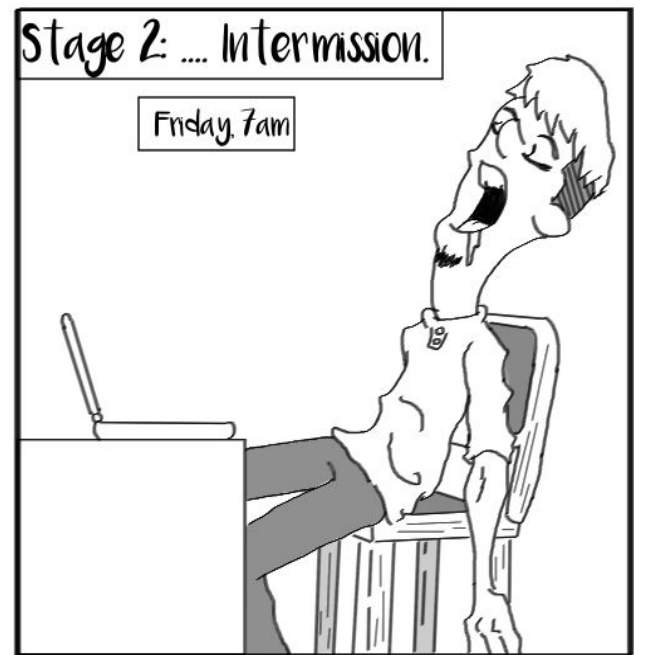
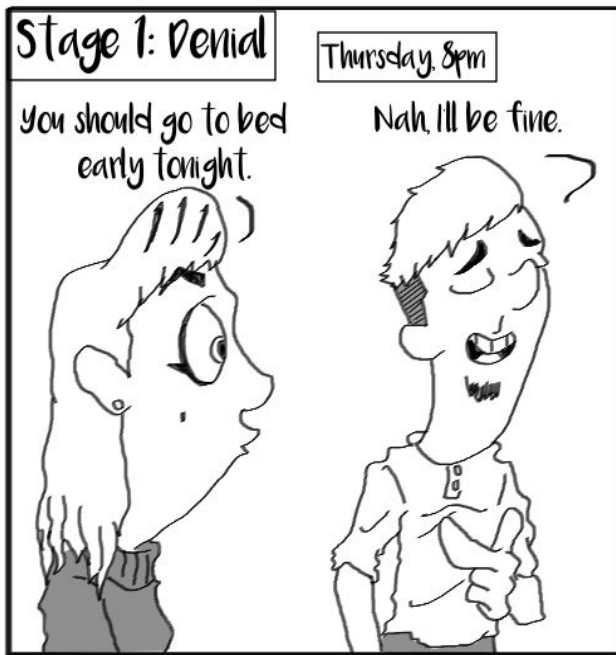
No matter their position, the faculty at Truman should not just focus on the classroom when considering the well-being of the University. Faculty should be proactive about making the academic environment on campus a fuller educational experience for everyone involved.

We call ourselves the "Harvard of the Midwest," but not simply because Truman students are academically exceptional. The faculty at Truman pushes students to become critical thinkers and to excel as students and citizens outside of the classroom.

There is a saying that there are no small parts, only small actors. The same applies to our campus. There are no small positions, only small ambitions. Every faculty member at Truman has the opportunity to change our community. Whether faculty members push themselves to make that change is up to them. But we should aim to hire faculty members who will take that initiative and keep in mind they might have a chance to make an even bigger difference in a larger role down the road.

Those who are a part of the search for a university president are looking for someone with experience and dedication to the success of the University. We hope the Board of Governors is also looking for that same quality when appointing a provost, dean or any member of Truman's faculty. It is critical to hire someone with passion for Truman, because you never know what role they could play in our campus' future.

The Stages of Class Registration By August Davis



Men should discuss body image



Wyatt Beckman

Two years ago, I walked into what I believed would be a typical lecture for my nutrition class. As the lecture went on, the professor came to a few slides on a topic I had, until that day, never really thought too much about — eating disorders. I left that lecture with an uneasy feeling in my stomach — something akin to realizing you have been doing something incorrectly for years. For the first time in my life, I had come face to face with a reality of my daily existence, and my brain was left swimming in a volatile mixture of disbelief, a heavy dose of shame and a liberal sprinkling of fear.

Looking back, the signs of my struggles with eating disorder behaviors and my body image were there — subtle and secretive, but there. The sit-ups in bed after looking disapprovingly at my stomach, the self-imposed fasts and the feelings of failure and guilt with each trip to the scale in the bathroom. That day in nutrition class was the beginning of my journey through months of unhealthy rationalization, multiple online screening tests, confiding in a caring friend and, ultimately, months of counseling at University Counseling Services. Slowly but surely, my unhealthy thoughts became less pervasive and my behaviors less destructive. Today, I no longer receive counseling and am in recovery. My challenges aren't over, and the whispers of guilt and negativity still grow to shouts from time to time, but life is no longer dictated by what I see in the mirror or how many calories I consume.

Ultimately, I was lucky. I did not completely disregard the evidence of my unhealthy behaviors, and the few people I confided in along the way showed me care and support. I fear others will not be so fortunate. The downward spiral of self-doubt, body shame and eating disorder behaviors can be swift and unrelenting, especially when society tells you your anxiety is self chosen, your behaviors are normal and your pain is not real. It's especially tough when you're a man.

Eating disorders, body image issues and unrealistic body standards largely still are presented as women's concerns — uncharted waters for the smooth-sailing ship that is masculinity. This stereotype is perpetuated by even the most well-

meaning organizations and campaigns. A sorority's campaign shirts for eating disorder awareness week a couple years ago proudly proclaimed that "beauty comes in every size," and in doing so, subtly told us men have no place in the conversation about eating disorders. We celebrate body positive women on the same social media feeds as recently buffed-up celebrities and articles on the virtues of man bods. Our society seems to have no time, energy or space for men who want to be thinner, men who are psychologically broken, or men who are terrified by the number of calories in a slice of pizza. To be a man, one must be strong, self-reliant and ever-confident. To have an eating disorder or body insecurities is decidedly un-manly — to talk about those things is like slapping yourself in the face with your relinquished man-card.

As spring turns into summer, swimsuit season arrives and bro-tanks make an unwelcome return, I implore everyone to welcome the sunshine with a newfound sense of honesty and openness about the realities of the many challenges we can all face to feel comfortable in our own skin. To my fellow insecure men out there — admitting you're broken will not make you lose your coveted man-card, no matter what your macho bro-friends might try to convince you. To the people out there fighting the good fight for a healthy relationship with food and body image — thank you for what you do, but please acknowledge the similar challenges and struggles of men, too. Eating disorders are indeed more common in women, and yes, media create unrealistic and unhealthy beauty standards, but to ignore the similar challenges men face is to look at a burning house and say only some of the burning rooms are worth saving — or worse, to say only some of the rooms are on fire.

I am a man who gets anxious eating a doughnut, still fights unhealthy aspirations to wear pants that are one size smaller and battles the whispers of eating disorder behaviors. That should not sound like a contradiction. Until we collectively change our understanding and conversations about eating disorders, body image and insecurities, many men will continue to struggle in silence. I am finished being silent. It's time we allow other men to do the same.

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