

Health class should not include skinfold lab



Rachel Fechter

For a brief moment last Thursday I knew what cattle felt like. I was poked and prodded for the meat on my bones while standing awkwardly with anxious confusion. I'm not a cow, though. I'm a human being who was subjected to the "skinfold lab" for HLTH 195: Lifetime Health & Fitness.

The lab began with the students in my class corralled outside of Health Sciences building room 1208. We were told to pick a partner, and two-by-two, we entered the room to have our body fat percentages measured. My partner and I stood up and took our turns getting measured. An older gentleman approached us with a tool called a "caliper," which looked like a blue lobster claw with numbers on the side. The man pinched me with the blue lobster claw on my thigh, side and arm, and read out three numbers for each measurement. My partner and I wrote the numbers down and we left.

When I arrived back at my dorm, I pulled out my skinfold lab paper and used the provided sheet to find my fat percentage. The last page of the three-page lab had "classifications" that went with each set of percentages. The moment of truth came when I flipped over to the back page. My classification, I found out, was "poor." I thought for sure I had done the math wrong, but no, according to a piece of paper, I was fat.

I had always felt like I had a healthy body shape, but for that brief moment, my self esteem plummeted as I looked down at my slight stomach pudge and stood in the mirror, trying to stand up straighter and suck it back in. But then my feelings of self-loathing seemed to melt away and were replaced with a pure loathing of the skinfold lab.

I finished this lab feeling utterly dissatisfied. For starters, it was an inaccurate measure of data. Height and weight were not taken into account. How is a girl who is 5 feet 2 inches supposed to be compared to a

girl like me who is nearly 5 feet 10 inches? A tall person who eats and exercises the same amount as a short person will naturally weigh more because they have more mass. And on the flip side, shorter people naturally gain weight more easily than taller people do. Neither of these variables were taken into account, which makes for a flawed experiment. I also think health teachers at my school have no place telling me whether my body fat percentage is healthy or unhealthy, because they are not certified physicians.

Along with the logistics of the lab, I had a huge problem with the ethics behind it. Although my partner for the lab seemed nice, we barely knew each other's names, and suddenly we had to know each other's body fat percentages. I thought that was an invasion of privacy. Also, the fact that my teacher stated in class "if a doctor has told you not to do this lab, you can do an alternative assignment instead," was telling. I felt it was implied that people who struggle with severe depression, anxiety or eating disorders should not participate, because according to a doctor, it could further upset them. If this assignment potentially could cause a person struggling with a mental health disorder to relapse, shouldn't that be a red flag it's not a good idea? At a college with such high rates of depression and anxiety affecting its student population, you would think this would be considered more carefully.

Forty percent of female college students in the U.S. have eating disorders, according to waldcenter.org. And it's not just women who are affected. Between 4 and 10 percent of male college students in the U.S. also suffer from eating disorders, according to nationaleatingdisorders.org. After looking at these numbers, my question would be why so many students are subjected to a lab that might increase these percentages. Why should students have to feel ashamed of their bodies because an arbitrary piece of paper tells them to? Chances are, students know if they have a little or a lot of fat on their bodies. They likely don't need to go through the humiliation of being pinched with a blue lobster claw just to find out their body fat percentage is supposedly "poor."

In the future, this lab should not be conducted. Truman students have enough to worry about without having their flaws further highlighted. Let's fold the skinfold lab away for good.

Rachel Fechter is a freshman communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

The Case

Against BMI

- Exaggerates thinness in short people and fatness in tall people.
- A tall but lean Olympic athlete and a couch potato with the same height and weight would have the same BMI.
- Waist size is a better indicator of obesity and diabetes than BMI.

Source: medicalnewstoday.com/articles/265215

Joining Greek Life can be beneficial



Jeremy Busch

The best treasure I've found in college has not been in classes or in sports, but in something I never imagined I'd join. Despite all the criticism it receives, I'm proud to stand up for what has given me so much — Greek Life.

Greek Life initially was not on my horizon when I came to college. I actually ridiculed my roommate — my high school best friend — for rushing and signing the fall of our freshman year. But during my first several months, there was something missing from my college experience. The friends I made through dorm life and classes were enjoyable, but I longed for the family atmosphere I had with my group of friends in high school — who had my back, who were with me through ups and downs, and who pushed me to be a better person. With this in mind, I ventured into the fraternal experience during the spring of my freshman year by joining Beta Theta Pi.

People say going Greek is buying friends, but I can tell you this — I was far undercharged for the value of my experience. Similar minds, bonded together through an unpredictable college journey, produce a brotherhood that cannot be measured. We remain connected for life, and no amount of money can buy the genuine experiences of Greek Life.

Greek Life has been a tremendous avenue for personal growth, especially in my leadership abilities. Just two months after initiation, I found myself on an eight-man executive committee of a fraternity with close to 100 members. Under the leadership of a faculty advisor who's been with Beta for nearly two decades, the committee navigated the turbulence of leading a large and complex organization. That leadership experience cannot be taught in a classroom — it can only be gained through actual decision-making processes, an area which Greek Life has in abundance.

During my high school years, there was a lot of value placed in taking honors and advanced placement classes. Obviously, they provided an incredible academic opportunity for intellectual growth, but more so, the classroom environment led me to be a better student. I loved surrounding myself with peers brighter, more ambitious and more driven than I was, because it pushed me to be the best I could be. My competitive nature fueled me to match the success of my classmates.

In this same respect, I have found equal ambition and drive in the Greek Life community. As

a freshman, contrary to my previous notion of fraternities, I was greeted by an abundance of upperclassmen with top-notch grade point averages, widespread campus involvement and resumés the Career Center would pin on the fridge.

I starkly remember meeting a future fraternity brother during my rush who helped shed new light on Greek Life. He was a junior who I certainly would have classified as a "jock," but after getting to know him, I later found out he had taken seven advanced placement tests, came to Truman State on a full ride and now is employed at one of the most prestigious actuarial consultant firms in St. Louis. It is men like this who inspire me. In this Greek Life community, I found my drive, my ambition and my longing to be the best version of myself. I do not believe this would have come about without my fraternal affiliation.

I'm not sure where I'd be without Greek Life. The numerous opportunities it has provided me define who I am and where I am today, and most importantly, where I'll be tomorrow. Many on the outside have chosen to write off the whole system as a waste. If only they knew how wrong they were.

Jeremy Busch is a senior communication major from Ballwin, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

How is your experience with Greek Life?

I'm not in Greek Life but my two siblings — who have graduated — were in Greek. It just wasn't for me.

Shannon Lynch
Senior



I'm not in any Greek anything. It just seems to consume all their time. I don't have a positive view of Greek Life and the movies don't help.

Aderinsola Adesida
Freshman



I'm not involved, so I've had no interactions with Greek Life. I have nothing against them, though.

Stacie Wiegman
Sophomore



My experience has been awesome. I'm part of Beta Theta Pi, and I've had the ability to network and have gained many opportunities around campus

Garrett Fowler
Senior

