

Truman offers stress relief for students

BY PAIGE YUNGERMANN
Staff Writer

Stress is one problem every college student is familiar with. Between classes, extracurricular activities, jobs and other aspects of college life, Truman State students know what it is like to be stressed out.

One University resource that helps students handle stress is University Counseling Services. UCS provides students with free or inexpensive services such as individual and group counseling.

Brenda Higgins, Student Health Center and Counseling Services Director, said stress is one reason why students use UCS. Higgins said counseling helps students determine the cause of their stress and how to manage it.

"Most of our students that come here are high-achieving students," Higgins said. "We have a lot of Type A personalities, and when you put a lot of Type A personalities together, that creates stress. Stress is not always bad. Stress can motivate. It is when the stress becomes overwhelming that we like to think we can help students navigate through that."

Higgins said UCS is distinctive because its five full-time counselors are trained to deal with issues pertaining to college students.

A student's first two UCS visits are free, Higgins said. After that, she said each visit costs \$10. For group counseling, she said there is a one-time \$10 fee. She said these fees cannot be billed through insurance because they are such a low cost. However, if someone is unable to afford the \$10 fee, Higgins said they still can attend counseling if they fill out a waiver in the UCS office.

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Higgins said psychiatric services are more expensive than counseling. She said there is a psychiatrist who works part time at UCS, and the fees for psychiatric services are billed through insurance because the psychiatrist is a medical doctor. The rest of the UCS staff, while certified in counseling, are not medical doctors like a psychiatrist, Higgins said.

Any full- or part-time Truman student can use UCS services, Higgins said. She said faculty members cannot use the counseling services personally, but they can consult with someone at UCS about issues with a student or another faculty member.

Higgins said the top reasons students go to UCS are anxiety and depression. She said other issues include difficult breakups, roommate relationships, issues relating to sexuality or mental health problems such as bipolar disorder.

Higgins said her advice to students who are considering using UCS is to do so when they begin having issues.

"It's better not to wait until it is so disabling that your classes and everything have already been damaged," Higgins said. "One will generally improve quicker if you seek services early as opposed to when you're really wiped out. Early treatment is important."



Courtney Kauffman/Index

Above: The Wellness Zone provides comfortable seating and massage chairs, which are available for students any time the library is open. Massages are \$1 for a three minute massage, \$5 for a 15 minute massage and \$10 for a 30 minute massage.

Right: The Wellness Zone provides a stress free environment with games and a student worker to give advice to students. The Wellness Zone is located in room 108 of Pickler Memorial Library and is open Monday through Thursday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



UCS Assistant Director Joe Hamilton said in addition to counseling, UCS also offers crisis services. Hamilton said if someone required emergency services outside of UCS business hours, he or she can call the Police Dispatcher and request to speak to the on-call UCS counselor.

Evonne Bird, health and exercise sciences professor, said another service available to stressed students is the Wellness Zone, located in Pickler Memorial Library room 108. Bird said it is a place where students can practice stress management techniques, such as meditation. The zone includes massage chairs, a chair to nap in and a student worker to give advice about dealing with stress. The Wellness Zone is open Monday-Thursday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., but students are free to use the massage chairs any time the library is open.

"It's a great way to practice stress management," Bird said. "Since it's in the library, you can stop in while you're studying. Everyone should come and use the space."

LARPing enters the classroom

BY RACHEL FECHTER
Staff Writer

"No swords will be involved, but you may get to burn a heretic."

Few Truman State students made it past the first sentence of an email sent to every student on campus two weeks ago, much less the phrase "Live Action Role Playing game," to reach this surprising statement. A heretic was not actually burned at the stake on Truman's campus. Instead, students were invited to enroll in a class participating in a live action role-play of the trials of Galileo.

History department chair Kathryn Brammall spearheaded the class using an interactive technique developed by "Reacting to the Past," a curriculum series, to get students excited about reenacting history.

"We're recreating who the actors were but we may not have the same outcome depending on how effective the various people are at persuading based upon their research, the speeches they give, the arguments they make, their ability to think on their feet and their ability to challenge their opponents," Brammall said. "If live action role-play is organized and has that deep historically accurate information, I think it can be incredibly enriching and fun."

Brammall said she had high hopes that after starting this class, students would be motivated to come back and participate in more historical LARPs.



Emily Ploch/Index

Kathryn Brammall lectures during the first live action role-playing class of the trials of Galileo of the semester. This course is taught using an interactive technique developed by the "Reacting to the Past" curriculum series.

Brammall said the class is a collaborative experience for the students, but it's also an opportunity for them to go in-depth with the sources and become a character from the past.

"I think in terms of innovative ways to get people to interact with the past and understand it, this kind of an approach can be really productive," Brammall said.

Junior Adrien Zambrano, president of the LARP club, said he participated because he was drawn to the class

because of his passion for live action role-playing. Zambrano said this class also was an enjoyable way to boost his GPA.

Zambrano said he hopes the class includes other passionate people.

"With any luck, I'm going to have a group of people who are very outgoing and willing to participate in the discussion, which is going to vary greatly from a normal classroom setting," Zambrano said.

While this class is new this year, other history professors at Truman already have been using the technique in their own classrooms. History professor Steven Reschly said he has been using LARPing in classes for 25 years.

Reschly said he compared LARP to the study abroad program because both allow you to experience something firsthand in a way you couldn't with your face buried in a textbook or your legs crammed under a desk.

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-History department chair
Kathryn Brammall

"I've had students tell me 10 years later, they don't remember much else about my class but they remember the simulations," Reschly said. "It addresses different styles of learning. Some people learn better by action or participation. This gets them involved and moving around. This is a way of being there rather than just reading about it."

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