

From the *desk* of the *Editor*

Tuition freeze could have consequences

Frozen. As of late, we associate this word with the state of our noses, fingers and toes as we trudge through the beginnings of another Kirksville winter between academic buildings, or with the hit Disney movie. At the end of last month, however, this word gained a new connotation when Gov. Jay Nixon announced an agreement among Missouri public two- and four-year schools to freeze current tuition rates for the 2016-2017 academic year. He instead proposed supplying these institutions with increased funding intended to make up for the lack of tuition adjustment.

At first glance, this seems amazing. From a student's perspective, the news that next year should not cost more than this one is fantastic. Even we, the Index Editorial Board, are relieved when looking at finances, and starting to budget and plan for next year. However, as outlined in the article "New Budget Freezes Tuition" on page one, the Truman State administration and State Rep. Nate Walker said much needs to be done before our University sees the money Nixon is promising.

That being said, we would like to discuss what this could mean for Truman and what must happen during the next year for this plan to work as proposed. University President Troy Paino soon will ask the Board of Governors to consider the situation and make a decision about the tuition freeze. This means Truman tentatively is starting on a path that aligns with the tuition freeze agreement. Regardless of whether the Board of Governors approves that course of action, Paino confirmed the Board will make the budget for next year under the assumption Truman will receive the increased funding. This will make the higher education funding Nixon is talking about imperative to accomplish everything outlined in the budget.

While we, the Index Editorial Board, commend the governor for taking steps to make our education more affordable, Nixon essentially is asking Truman and other public Missouri colleges to count their chickens before they hatch. While the tuition freeze will provide some financial relief to students, it seems to be tying Truman's hands when making adjustments to take care of the university. From an administrative perspective, that's a gamble.

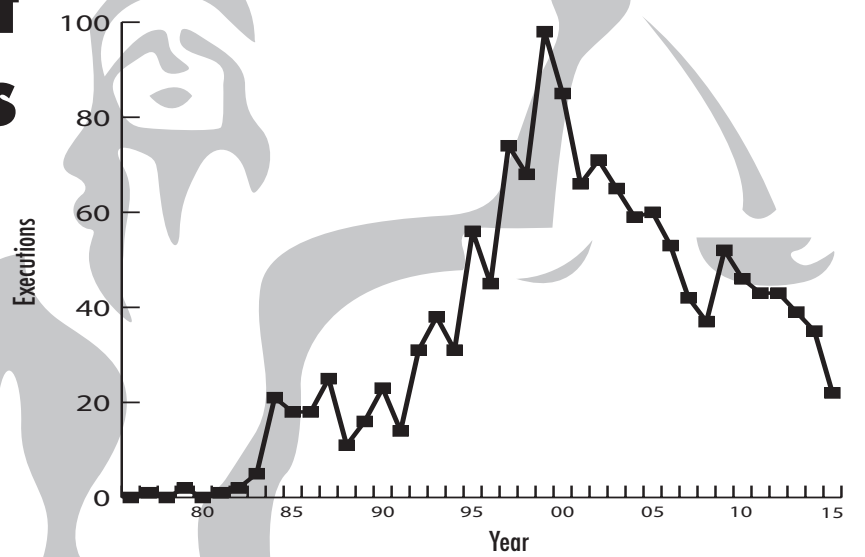
The question we want to raise — and are hesitant to answer — is what will be the first to go if some or all of this additional funding does not arrive as planned? Paino has made it clear raising faculty and staff salaries above the cost of living adjustment is a top priority right now, and he aims to see that reflected in the budget for the coming year. We applaud him for this objective, and look forward to seeing our highly competent and beloved professors and staff receive the pay they deserve. Truman's lauded educational merit is mostly, if not entirely, a direct result of the time and effort they apply every day in classrooms and offices.

In Missouri, the average university professor earns \$96,975 a year, according to data collected by chronicle.com. In comparison, the average Truman professor earns \$72,072 per year, 74.3 percent of the average, according to the same source. Our professors are above average and deserve above average pay.

However, if funding is not secured as planned, are faculty and staff salary adjustments still guaranteed? The short answer is nothing is ever guaranteed. Paino indicated a potential absence of the additional funds will affect the University as a whole, including salaries for faculty and staff. What to cut when the budget gets tight is presumably a question the University faces every year. However, with large-scale efforts by state government to make college more affordable, we can only imagine it complicates the decision making process, and creates a sense of uncertainty when looking at what the University budget would cover.

While freezing tuition might be great for students like ourselves, we want to make sure those who make this University what it is today also are taken care of.

Number of executions per year in the United States



According to deathpenaltyinfo.org

The death penalty should be repealed



Holly Fisher

During his visit to the United States last week, Pope Francis urged the state of Georgia to reconsider its decision to execute inmate Kelly Gissendaner. The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles denied the pope's plea, and executed Gissendaner Wednesday, Sept. 30. In response to the execution, Pope Francis addressed Congress with a call to permanently abolish the death penalty. This plea was addressed to the American people as well, and now we must ask ourselves, "Should capital punishment be continued in the United States?"

Before this week, I never had a particularly strong stance on the death penalty controversy. I knew both sides of the argument, but I always figured capital punishment simply was part of the world we live in. However, after considering the matter more seriously, I am inclined to believe Pope Francis has some valid points.

One of the most common arguments for the death penalty is made as a demand for true justice. Capital punishment generally is reserved for those who have been convicted of premeditated murder, and since those individuals consciously denied their victims the right to live, it is only fitting they should be denied that same right.

We have a saying for this — "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

When someone burglarizes a house, the law does not demand their house be burglarized, and when someone is charged with sexual harassment, the law does not require that person be subjected to sexual harassment as their punishment. So why do we enforce this punishment under certain circumstances, but not others?

The "eye for an eye" treatment doesn't always hold true either. For example, Gissendaner was executed for conspiring to murder her husband, but it was her

boyfriend who actually committed the act. He received a life sentence. In this case, the system seems subjective at best, or even hypocritical.

Capital punishment also is seen as an appropriate alternative for criminals who have no hope of rehabilitation. However, there is no way to decide who can and cannot be rehabilitated.

"... a just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation," Pope Francis said during his address to Congress.

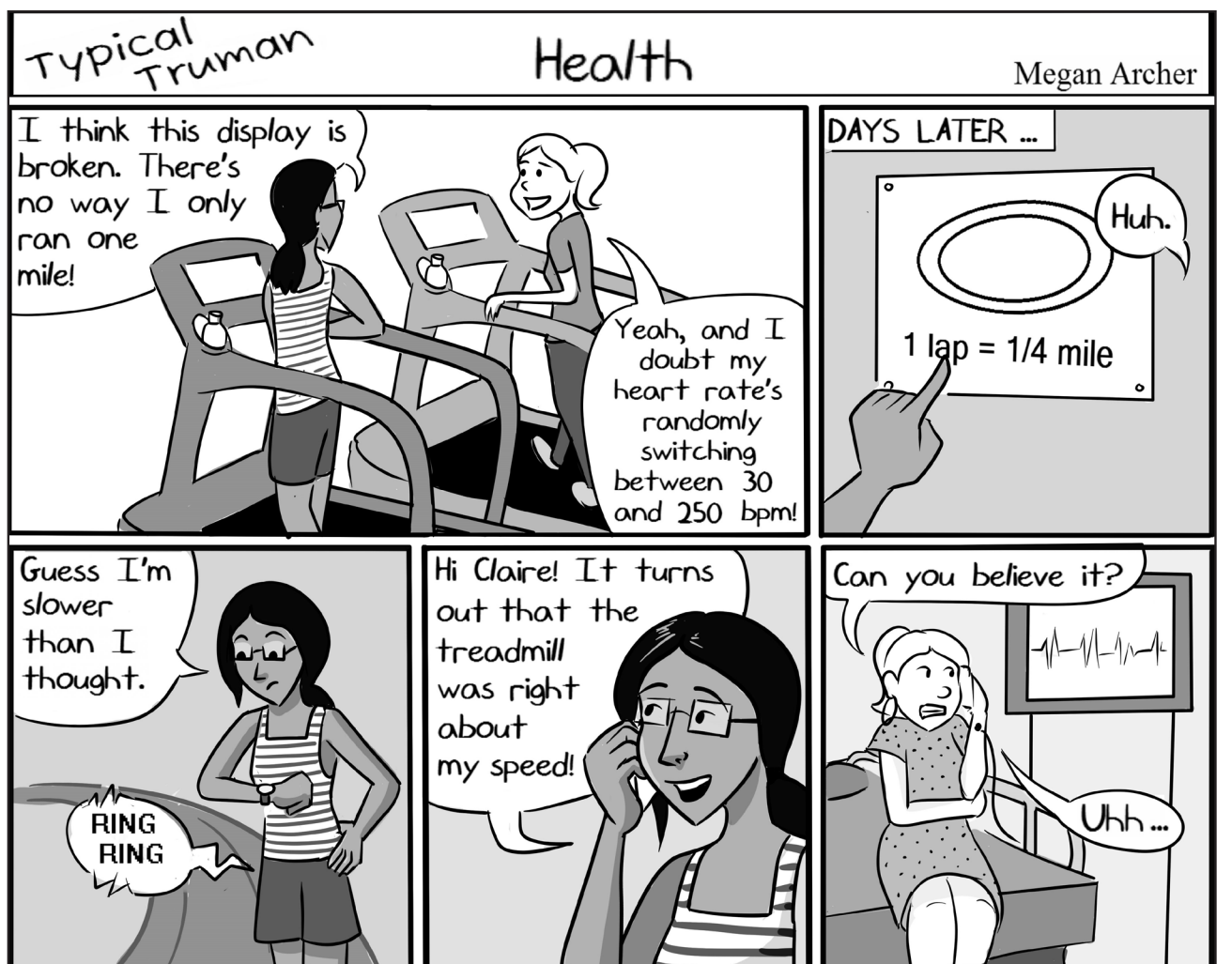
Convicts can become productive members of society if given the chance. While they might not deserve much after whatever crime they've committed, they deserve at least that much.

Another common argument for the death penalty has always been about the cost. When a convict is sentenced to life in prison, taxpayers are forced to pay for the crimes of that individual. This essentially gives the convict a free ride — all their meals are provided, as are their housing, utilities and recreation. Those supporting the death penalty would then argue this is not suitable punishment, but those people forget prison is not exactly a walk in the park. Life in prison might look like a good deal from a cost-efficiency perspective, but the freedom of inmates, by definition, is restricted severely. They might have free food, but that food is not good food. They might have free housing, but that housing consists of a small cell with a complete lack of privacy. Not to mention, when we say it is more cost-effective to execute an inmate, we literally are reducing that person's life to a dollar amount. That, to me, is one of the coldest perspectives a person can have regarding human life.

Now, none of this is said with the purpose of turning those who were condemned to death into martyrs or saying they were convicted unjustly. While I do believe they deserved the right to live, they were condemned because of the heinous and unforgivable crimes they committed. But killing the person who committed those crimes does not right what they have done.

Human life should be sacred, and one way to treat it as such is to abolish the death penalty as Pope Francis has urged us to do.

Holly Fisher is a senior English and linguistics major from Elizabethtown, Ky.



Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the academic year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor-in-chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor-in-chief, managing editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor-in-chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

Letters Policy

The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Letters containing personal attacks will not be published. All letters to the editor must be typed and submitted by e-mail to index.opinioneditor@gmail.com or at <http://tmn.truman.edu/theindex>. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. No individual may submit more than one letter per week.

Advertising Policy

For up-to-date information on current advertising rates or to inquire about the availability of classified ads, contact the TMN Advertising Manager at 314-239-0899 or advertising.trumanmedia@gmail.com

Contact

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, email index.editor@gmail.com, call 660-785-4449 or submit a letter via tmn.truman.edu/theindex.