The Missouri legislature has made a commitment to fund higher education institutions based on student performance or "quality," according to a February 2004 report. However, many student organizations and campus advocates argue this "quality" funding model discriminates against Truman State University and other public institutions that serve a large percentage of underprivileged students.

"The more students the institution serves, the more likely it is the student performance grant will take away from Truman," said Abby Sineni, a junior psychology major and president of the Truman Student Senate. "I think now with the new governor in office, this will be an issue that we need to bring up to the fore." The new governor, Jay Nixon, a Democrat, has said he supports funding based on student performance.

The Truman Student Senate's campaign against "quality" funding began in the fall of 2002, when a Missouri legislature committee began the process of developing a new system to distribute education funds. Truman officials and students advocated against all forms of "quality" funding, as they feared the system may penalize institutions that serve a large percentage of underprivileged students.

"I think it's important to recognize that Truman is a public university with a mission to serve the state's neediest students," said David Bowers, Truman's assistant vice president of enrollment management. "We serve over 8,000 students, which is a high percentage of the state's population. We have an extensive number of minority students and students who are the first in their family to attend college. We have a significant number of students who are going to college for the first time. We have a large percentage of students who are working full-time and going to school. Truman is a public university with a mission to serve the state of Missouri and its mission is not to serve a small, elite group of students."