Index Endorsement

As a newspaper, we exist to serve our community. During this election year, we have done our best to serve you by providing information regarding ballot propositions, candidates and their policies. As the elections approach, we decided to take this opportunity to put some of the ballot questions and candidates into perspective for our community.

We decided to address races that we felt impacted campus life most, including the sheriff and the State House of Representatives races, and propositions that matter to us most as students.

We have been following the race between the candidates for district three state representative Rebecca McClanahan and Nate Walker. We appreciate their experience and past service to the community and district. We think their past service in the House qualifies both candidates for the position, but when considering what is best for our community, we endorse Rebecca McClanahan.

Her outspoken support for Truman State and her strong opposition to a funding system based on enrollment assures us that we would have an advocate in Jefferson City that will protect our ideals as members of the Truman community.

In a community where votes are personal and ballots are based on interactions more than party lines, we have expectations for our candidates. That means we expect a candidate to explain how they're going to protect Kirksville's higher education community. We expect, regardless of how weak state campaign finance laws are, that our candidates will live and become elected by our community standards, regardless of how gray the official state campaign regulations might be.

We think Rebecca McClanahan will be the strongest advocate for our community and our campus.

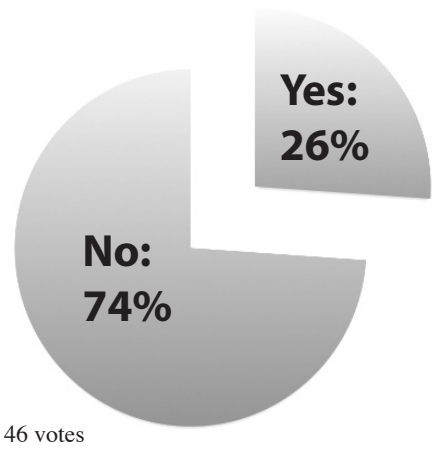
In the sheriff race, after hearing from both candidates during forum, we would like to endorse Larry Logston. We were impressed by the support the other deputy sheriffs have shown for him. We think that when your peers respect you enough to support you instead of their current leader, it says a great deal about your leadership.

Finally, we would like to voice our support for Proposition B because it has the potential to help higher education. As students who attend an institution threatened by state budget cuts, we should support this proposition for the future of education throughout the state. Investing in education is investing in the future, and we owe it to the students of the future to try and improve the opportunities they have.

This editorial does not represent or reflect the views and opinions of Truman State, the communication department, Truman faculty members or Truman Media advisors and is the sole responsibility of the Index.

Web Poll

Do you support Missouri's Proposition B?



*out of 46 votes

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Serving the University community since 1909

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Corrections

The "Student Professional Health Organization" referenced in last week's page 11 "Health class helps fight local hunger" story was misnamed. The organization's actual name is the Student Public Health Organization. The story also stated the health science department has a service learning requirement, when it does not.

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please email index.editor@gmail.com, call us at 660-785-4449 or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo., 63501.

Letter to the Editor

Some 60 years ago political science took a "scientific" turn. Since then, as Connor Stangler noted in his recent column, we have fought battles over how to define ourselves: what should we study, and how should we study it? It is true that the desire for measurement -- to allow for discernment of regularities and patterns, and even causal antecedents – at times can lead to the study of the trivial, or to reductionist conceptions of complex human phenomena.

But before we are renamed The Department of Dehumanities, and especially during this period of registration, when students might be led by Stangler's views to dismiss Political Science out-of hand, I wanted to offer another view. Consider: Do presidents attempt to fulfill their campaign pledges? Do politicians follow preference-changes of the middle class? Does the economy grow more strongly under Democratic presidents or Republican Presidents? Which is more stimulative, tax cuts or government spending? Do judicial selection systems have measurable effects on citizen satisfaction? on judicial rulings? What are psychological factors associated with greater and lesser support for marriage equality? Why are international sanctions are often unsuccessful (making the recent collapse of the Iranian Rial quite notable)? When do industries actually want to be regulated? Under what conditions are constitutional guarantees most effective (rather than mere parchment promises)? Is aid to war-torn areas counter-productive — since it can actually prolong conflicts? What are the editorial and reportorial pressures that lead a newspaper to publish a press release as straight news?

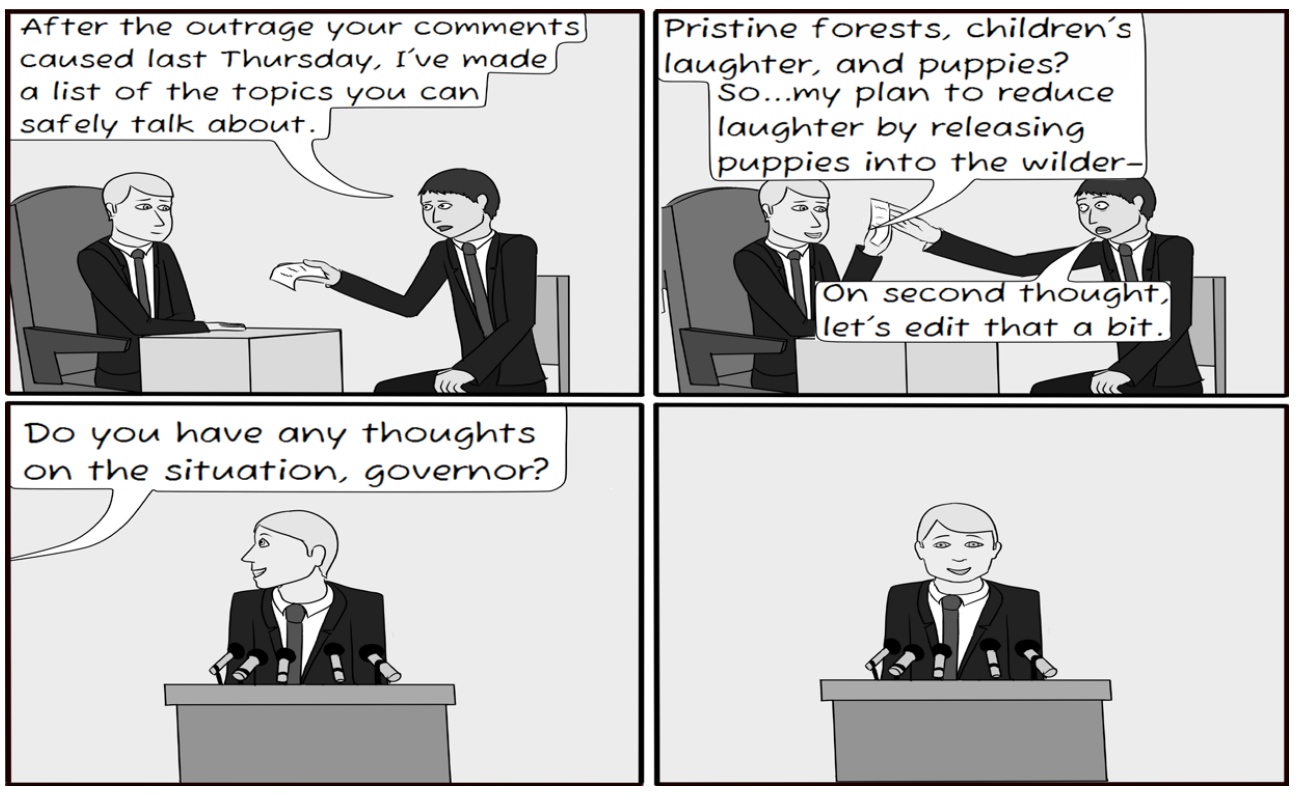
The substantive answers to such questions, which might help us to be more informed citizens, often belie "common knowledge." Equally important, our students learn to practice careful thinking: the questions require us to imagine, and control for, alternative explanations (and yes, sometimes to reduce human interactions to numbers). We also borrow methods or insights from our friends in Economics and Psychology; we are liberal artsy that way.

We do the best we can to make sense of a messy world. Since I am not particularly concerned with whether we are a "real" science (itself a political question), I am okay with Stangler's call to rename "political science." My proposal: "Department of un-damn-believably talented students, working with a dedicated and award winning faculty to try to make sense of a crazy, mixed-up world through the study of a compelling combination of political ideas, institutions and behaviors." Because this title celebrates what we do, I embrace the risk of being called a "Professor of Damn Crazy."

Paul Parker
Political science professor

Cartoon

By Megan Archer



Polls reflect debate performance

Lacy Murphy

During the Presidential Debates of 2012, I probably wasn't the only one staring intently at the screen, waiting for one of the candidates to slip up. The suspense was intoxicating. However, there is much dispute about whether these mistakes are significant at all.

This year's debates are more important than many acknowledge. We have the opportunity to compare Obama to his 2008 performance and see how these numbers correlate to registered voter support during the 2008 and 2012 campaigns.

The 2008 Presidential Election was a decisive victory for Barack Obama against John McCain. During the three Presidential Debates, Obama was the clear winner. The first 2008 debate between the candidates showed Obama defeating McCain in the polls, with 46 percent of Americans declaring Obama the winner and 34 percent siding with McCain, according to www.gallup.com. The second debate also was a victory for Obama, with 56 percent of Americans pronouncing Obama the winner and 23 percent backing McCain. The third debate was another win for Obama with 56 percent asserting Obama's dominance against the competition and only 30 percent reporting McCain the victor. Before the 2008 debates Obama had the support of 48 percent of registered voters versus McCain's 44 percent. After the debates, Obama was even further ahead, with the support of 51 percent of registered voters to McCain's 42 percent.

By using Obama's ratings during 2008, a year during which he was clearly the victor, and comparing them to this year's results, we can see an interesting trend. This year, Mitt Romney won the first debate against Obama, 72 percent to 20 percent respectively, according to a Gallup poll. Obama won the next two debates, according to Americans' opinions, with a 51 percent to 38 percent win during the second debate and a 56 percent to 33 percent win during the third debate.

This initial Romney victory seems to have affected the polls. Before the debates, Obama had the registered voter support, with 49 percent backing the President and 45 percent backing Romney. After the debates, Romney rose to 47 percent, an increase of two percentage points, and Obama fell to 48 percent, a decrease of one percent, putting them neck and neck.

During 2008, when Obama was the decisive victor of all three debates, voter support for him increased, widening the gap between him and McCain before the elections. However, this year when Obama was less successful during the debates, his support decreased while Romney's increased, narrowing the gap. The debates might not be the deciding factor for voters, but they certainly have an effect.

Looking back at the debates, there are many factors to evaluate when assessing them. Moderators influence how Americans view the candidates. Moderators can be either active or disengaged. Jim Lehrer received flak for his weak moderation, while Martha Raddatz was praised — even though she allowed Joe Biden free reign but interrupted Paul Ryan and pressed him for more information. At least Lehrer was consistent and didn't ask the candidates namby pamby questions like "What could you both give to this country as a man, as a human being, that no one else could?" This is the Presidential Debate, not a Miss America pageant. Luckily, the mediators of the following debates were far more successful.

Disposition of the candidate also played a huge part. Biden adopted a condescending, patronizing and arrogant persona during the Vice Presidential Debate, which seemed to please Democrats and vex Republicans. Biden only succeeded in pushing undecided voters even further away with this cantankerous old man routine. Republicans were pleased with Ryan's energy and passion, but he also didn't lasso up any undecided voters. Let's not forget Obama's uninspiring performance during the first debate — Romney should write him a thank you note for that one. Romney didn't seem genuine throughout the debates and came off as robotic and fake.

Voters should remember that candidates are well prepared for these debates. The candidates know what questions will be asked and their responses are studied and prepared in advance. These debates are geared toward keeping committed voters, not swaying the undecided. Regardless, numbers don't lie. Americans are watching the debates, and thought it might not decide their vote entirely, it does matter.

Lacy Murphy is a junior French major from Springfield, Mo.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. 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. This week, the Our View was written by the editor in chief and managing 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, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. They must be submitted by email to index.opinionseditor@gmail.com or on our website at www.trumanindex.com. 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 a week.

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