In the early days of the University, founder Joseph Baldwin recognized the importance of taking learning beyond the classroom and required all students to be actively involved in at least one organization or activity outside of their classes. The educational pioneer would be proud to see that the opportunities for learning experiences outside the classroom have expanded even further, now reaching as far as around the world. To meet the challenges of an ever-changing world, Truman offers students access to four powerful learning opportunities that go well beyond the walls of the classroom — internships, study abroad, service learning, and undergraduate research.

In keeping with the tradition first put in place by Baldwin, the University encourages all students to participate in at least one of these four pedagogies before they graduate. By expanding the web of learning, the University is providing an educational environment that meets the challenges of the world today, so that Truman State University can continue to produce graduates who consistently stand out above the crowd.

**Jump–Starting Careers through Internships**

An internship takes students out of the classroom and places them in a real working environment, whether it is on campus, in Kirksville or in another city or state, and can offer a college student a variety of benefits. For one, it provides a chance to see how what they are learning in
class is applied in a real working environment. "Conversely, the students talk about how they can take back to class what they picked up during the internship experience," says Dave Kincaid, assistant director of the University's Career Center, who often hears comments about how an internship experience boosted a student's confidence in his or her ability to make it in the 'real world.'

Internships can also help students identify their future career and put them on course to their dream job. Kincaid has seen where internships had a huge impact on students by helping determine if a particular job was something they would want to do for the rest of their lives. "Some students tell us that they wish to change gears as a result of their internship," says Kincaid, "while others talk about how they enhanced their networking skills, interviewing skills, and social skills by learning how to operate as a professional in an office environment."

When the time comes to pursue a full-time job, Kincaid says that students who have completed internships are usually looked upon more favorably in a hiring situation. "Approximately 50 percent of internship sites will offer their best interns positions after graduation, although this is more common in businesses than it is in the non-profit sector," says Kincaid. "The employers use internships to identify future talent, and even if the internship does not lead to a full-time position, a student who completes the internship shows an employer that he or she can follow through, exhibit maturity and learn."

At Truman, most internships require 40 hours of work per week and typically take place during the summer due to the nature of a student's schedule. "I let the students know they are not going to get rich doing this—it is entry level and sometimes less," says Kincaid. Instead of focusing on the pay, he encourages students to direct more attention to gaining experience, confidence, transferable skills, an understanding of the connection between the classroom and work environment, self-reflection, and most importantly, contacts and references for networking.

Some students procure internships on campus working in areas such as the University Press, Public Relations and the Career Center, and opportunities are also available in the local community at places like the Kirksville Chamber of Commerce, KTVO, Kirksville Daily Express, Trosen Law Firm, Kraft Foods, and the Adair County Division of Family Services. "We also have resources to help find internships at different places across the country, but a lot of our students intern in Missouri and surrounding states," says Kincaid, who is always on the lookout for new sites. "Alumni and others can make a great difference in our students' lives by opening up their workplace to students for a paid or unpaid internship placement."

Broadening Horizons through Study Abroad

More and more Americans are studying overseas, and many students are drawn to Truman State University because of its study-abroad program, which offers programs ranging in length from three weeks to one year in locations around the globe. According to the Open Doors survey conducted by the Institute of International Education, Truman was ranked sixth in the nation among master's universities for number of students studying abroad.

"The number of Truman students studying abroad has steadily increased, and I think the number will continue to grow," says Alci Arias, assistant director of the University's Center for International Education. "At Truman, study-abroad programs are available in 48 countries around the world with a wide range of programs accessible to students regardless of their levels in a foreign language."

"In today's world, a liberal arts and sciences education would not be complete without an international experience," says Arias, who has seen the impact of a study-abroad experience on students first-hand. "Students who study abroad are much more accepting of other people's ideas and see no barriers to working with others from different backgrounds," says Arias. "Employers are very anxious to hire a person who has studied abroad because they see them as
open-minded individuals and someone they can easily train." In addition, Arias says that study abroad enhances a resume to get into a graduate school.

Lisa Rubenthaler, a junior from Wichita, Kan., found that the semester she spent studying in Valparaíso, Chile, proved invaluable when she returned to her classes at Truman. "As a Spanish major, studying abroad is really helping me out in my classes and it has really made me see things — everything — from a new angle," says Rubenthaler. In Chile, the people had different values and traditions and wore different clothes, and Rubenthaler never noticed that the country was less developed than the United States until she returned to the states and had all of the commodities that she had been living without in Chile. "It was amazing to come back and realize that I survived six months without any of those things, and I never even noticed."

The semester Rubenthaler spent in Chile fits in well with her plans for the future. After she finishes her degree in Spanish, she plans to pursue a master's in elementary education. "I hope to either teach Spanish as a part of my classroom or teach in a Spanish immersion elementary school," says Rubenthaler.

Sam Murphey, a senior from Rolla, Mo., with a communication: journalism major, says his study-abroad experience at the New Anglo-American College in Prague, Czech Republic, was the perfect culmination for his undergraduate career. "My coursework in journalism and political science at Truman prepared me to immerse myself in Eastern European history, politics and culture, and I now have a much deeper appreciation for the people of that region," says Murphey.

During the time he spent abroad, Murphey had the opportunity to investigate the mission and work of Transitions Online, an online, public-interest journalism group headquartered in Prague. "The journalists at TOL have devoted their careers to studying the political and economic transitions in post-communist states, and learning about their work was fascinating."

Spending a semester in Prague was Murphey's first international experience, and now that he's opened the door to visiting foreign places, he says he's hooked. "I'll always be looking for opportunities to visit other parts of the world and to learn about different cultures and people," says Murphey, who plans to pursue a master's in journalism in August.

Not only does study abroad provide an opportunity to gain a cross-cultural and global perspective, but students often gain a new sense of self-sufficiency as well as a higher level of confidence and maturity. "To study abroad changes an individual forever — dramatically, irrevocably, and positively," says Arias. "The spirit of adventure found in the study-abroad student will enrich his or her life and enhance every endeavor and every future relationship."

Learning through Service to Others

College campuses across the nation have a new buzzword, service learning. Although service-learning programs sound very similar to a volunteer project, they take volunteerism a step further by linking the community projects to the subject-based learning taking place in the classroom. Service learning not only promotes the action of volunteering to help others in the community, it encourages students to reflect, develop, and learn through their participation in community-organized services.

The importance of this model of learning by serving on the Truman campus is apparent by the number of students who participate in service-learning projects. According to the Student Senate vision document, Truman Tomorrow: Arete, approximately 87 percent of all graduating seniors participated in community service activities last year. The document explains how the projects allow students to become participants, even if only for a short time, within various social problems.

One example is Amy Bridges, a junior exercise science major from Lenexa, Kan., who went to New Orleans, La., over spring break this year to help with the Katrina cleanup. "I had the opportunity of working for the nicest family," says Bridges, who helped a 78- and 79-year-old couple whose house had been lifted off its stilts and had floated 100 yards away into the neighbor's house. "The house was very special to these people because in the 1940s, the man and his father built it without power tools, and they had never lived anywhere else," says Bridges, who worked with a group that spent three days cleaning out the couple's house and searching for items that survived the storm.

"I learned so much through this family… I think one of the most important things I learned while I was down there is that the physical belongings are not nearly as important as the relationships that one has during his or her lifetime," says Bridges. "Watching a community pull together the way New Orleans has is unbelievable until it's experienced."

Bridges says her two passions in life are art/design and helping people, and she will be pursuing a master's degree in prosthetics and orthotics. "By going into this field, I get to utilize both of my passions," says Bridges, who plans to design braces and prosthetic limbs.

Lukin Murphy, a senior from Silex, Mo., majoring in sociology/anthropology wanted to spend a summer doing something besides getting a paycheck or taking classes. Since he enjoys serving people with developmental and physical disabilities, he decided to participate in "Build America," a cross-country construction-oriented service project that raises funds and awareness on behalf of people with disabilities.

"One of the most enjoyable and exciting aspects of the program is that it takes place across the nation; we traveled from North Carolina to Wisconsin, down to Kansas and Texas, then west to Alabama and finally ending in South Carolina," says Murphy, who traveled with a 20-person team that went to six camps in six weeks building accessible camp amenities. "I was able to combine my love of travel with the desire to serve while learning valuable construction and empathy skills," says Murphy. "Needless to say, it was a life-changing experience — I was able to see thousands of miles of beautiful countryside while bonding with people who were to become lifelong friends; there is no better way to spend a summer than a road trip, especially a road trip which makes a difference for thousands of children and adults who attend summer camps."
Engaging Students in the Learning Process through Research

Involving all students in meaningful research has become a hallmark of Truman State University where undergraduates are encouraged to participate in some scholarly or research activity outside of their regular coursework, and a research conference held on campus each year has become one of the University's signature events.

"The Research Conference is a day when the University can come together as one large community and celebrate the students' work, and this is the 19th year the University has sponsored the conference," says Jeffrey Osborn, professor and convener of biology, who has served as chair of the University-wide Undergraduate Research Committee for the last four years. 

"The conference name has changed over the years — initially it started in science and exercise science, and it has been expanding and growing, and for a long time it's been campus-wide providing an opportunity for students in every discipline to participate."

For many, research conjures up images of science experiments in a laboratory; however, at Truman, the term represents scholarly work from all disciplines found on campus. Instead of calling their work 'research,' artists might prefer to use the phrase 'creative endeavor' and a humanities major might prefer 'scholarship,' but regardless of the term used, there are research opportunities for all the disciplines. The University's conference has adapted to accommodate presentation options suitable for the different areas of study with categories that range from creative work by performing artists to a technology showcase.

"At a number of institutions, the campus community and the faculty like to think about their courses and their teaching as one piece and research as another piece, and there's this dichotomy," says Osborn. However, in reality he says the two pieces are intrinsically intertwined, and at Truman, the members of the faculty look for ways to enrich the curriculum with original research and scholarship that can be coupled with class work. "For example, instead of teaching my advanced biology elective course as an all-lecture class, I could spend part of the course allowing students to work on original scholarly projects, let them engage in some research and have independent conversations with me and other faculty about topics, and let them drive the discussion," says Osborn.

In addition to integrating a student's classroom knowledge, the scholarly projects can help students improve important skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving. Another important benefit that can happen as a result of having students engage in a scholarly project is a chance for the students to gain a new perspective on their field. Osborn notes that, for students, the research, scholarship and creative work is really about learning how to become a practitioner in the discipline. "You don't learn to be a chef by only watching the Food Channel or letting someone else tell you how to do it," says Osborn. "You have to be in the kitchen cooking, trying out recipes and doing it yourself."

Oftentimes, the hands-on participation in a research project completely changes the student's experience and motivates them to work harder on their classroom work. "I've seen it happen lots of times with students after they get into a project and it becomes more meaningful to them," says Osborn. "All of a sudden, the calculus class or the biology course they took makes sense; you cannot do that as effectively if you're sitting in a classroom passively listening to a faculty member talk."

According to the Student Senate vision document, data from the Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey revealed that Truman is ahead of not only public, but also four-year universities when it comes to undergraduates and faculty working together on research. The survey indicates that more than 79 percent of Truman faculty have worked with undergraduates on a research project, compared to 65.8 percent at public four-year universities and 66.1 percent of all four-year universities. In addition, the vision document noted that "Truman even has one of the largest delegations of students every year at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research."

Whether participating in research projects, service-learning activities, internships or study abroad, more and more students are discovering that their learning opportunities do not end at the classroom door. By enriching the educational environment, the University is encouraging students to optimize their college experience, and some students are finding that their most meaningful lessons are often found outside the four walls of the classroom.