Truman Among Nation's Best Values

The 2007 edition of "America's Best Value Colleges" published annually by The Princeton Review ranked Truman State University No. 4 on its list of top 10 public institutions. According to the guide, Truman is one of the best overall bargains — based on cost and financial aid — among the most academically outstanding colleges in the nation.

The latest edition of the annual guide includes 103 public schools and 47 private schools. New College of Florida was No. 1 on the list of best value public schools followed by North Carolina State University and California State University-Long Beach.

The Princeton Review also publishes the annual "Best 361 Colleges," and the 2007 edition named Truman State University as one of the nation's best universities for undergraduate education and ranked Truman 5th in the category "Students Happy with Financial Aid."

Truman State University has repeatedly shown up on other national rankings. For the last 10 years, U.S. News & World Report’s list of "America's Best Colleges" has named Truman as the No. 1 Public University in the Midwest among schools offering bachelor's and master's degrees.

University's History Chronicled in New Book

Recently, the Truman State University Press published Founding the Future: A History of Truman State University, a book by David C. Nichols, former music professor at Truman. The book traces the path of Truman State University as the school evolved from a small, regional teachers college to a nationally recognized, highly selective liberal arts and sciences institution.

Insights from students, faculty and administrators included in the book provide a unique perspective of the University's history.

The book is available on the Truman State University Press Web site at https://tsup.truman.edu/ and is also sold in local bookstores.
Fulbright Scholars Participate in Cultural Exchange

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ruman ranks among the country’s top 10 master’s universities for student placement in the Fulbright Program, and for the 2006-07 academic year, three graduates received Fulbright grants. Jared Erwin ('06), Aubrey Evans ('06), and Reneé Gordon ('06) are currently participating in the international educational program designed to foster mutual understanding between the United States and other countries.

Erwin was awarded a Fulbright Teaching Assistantship and is spending a year at a school in Berlin, Germany, where he works with teachers, helps with lesson plans, and interacts with students. Erwin says that not only does the experience provide an opportunity for him to offer new perspectives on the English language, such as helping with pronunciation, but he also has a chance to offer new perspectives on American culture and the stereotypes German students have regarding Americans. “I have been asked if I like Bush, why I am not fat, if I like Britney Spears, if I KNOW Britney Spears, and so many other things that seem to represent how the world sees Americans,” says Erwin, who feels privileged that he can help break down some of these stereotypes. “My work is not just about teaching English but about representing America — as cheesy as that may sound — and who I am as an American.”

Like Erwin, Evans’ Fulbright award took her to Germany where she is working as a foreign language assistant in a school in Hamburg. “Their system is a bit different than ours in that there are three different types or levels of schools,” says Evans, who is working at a Gymnasium, which she describes as the most challenging level and has students who are most likely college-bound. The Gymnasium level goes up to the 13th grade, while the other levels finish around the 10th grade after which the students learn a trade or work as an apprentice. “I did an exchange year at a Gymnasium after high school and was therefore familiar with the everyday life of a German student and how the schools are different than ours, but I was still interested in getting to see the educational system from the other side,” says Evans, who works closely with the other English teachers.

Evans is using her Fulbright experience to further improve her language skills and immerse herself in the German culture. Gordon received her Fulbright grant in the University Student category and is attending classes in the Musicology Department at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg in Germany. “As a Fulbright grantee, I hope to positively represent the United States to those I encounter, and I desire to build lasting friendships and connections with the people I meet,” says Gordon, who is working on deepening her interests in German music history and German philosophy. The Fulbright experience is providing an opportunity to not only improve her German language skills, but to also expand her experiences with music and musicology.” Gordon is also studying French, and her future plans include attending graduate school, pursuing a doctorate degree and becoming a university professor.

The Fulbright Program, which was created by Congress in 1946 as an educational and cultural exchange program, is administered by the U.S. Department of State and provides funding for students, scholars, teachers, and professionals to undertake graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools. In addition, Fulbright scholars from other countries come to universities, colleges, and schools in the United States to study, conduct research and teach.

Library Book Sale A Success

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ickler Memorial Library’s annual book sale was held on the Mall (behind the Library), Sept. 20-22, 2006. The sale was a great success with 6,000 items sold and $3,600 raised for Library materials and programs.

The book sale was an opportunity for Library staff to host a festive event on campus. Under a big tent, hundreds of buyers — students, faculty, staff, and visitors — enjoyed beautiful fall weather as they searched for books of interest, and walked away with bags, and sometimes boxes, of good buys.

The generosity of friends and alumni who donated books, music, magazines and other items made the sale special, and Library staff would like to thank everyone for their contributions.

Another Book Sale is planned for September 2007, and once again the Library is asking for your donations. If you would like to donate materials, please contact the Library Dean’s Office at (660) 785-4038 for information regarding delivery or local pick-up.
Renovations Under Way

• The Student Union Building, which serves as a meeting location for thousands of events each year, is currently undergoing a major renovation to enhance the physical environment and maximize the interior space. To limit disruptions of services provided in the facility, the construction project, which began in August 2006, was divided into three stages so that the building can remain open. The renovations will continue over the next three years.

• As part of a comprehensive plan to enhance campus housing, construction crews began working on Missouri Hall last year after the University’s new residence hall, West Campus Suites, opened for the fall 2006 semester. Once the renovation of Missouri Hall has been completed, students can look forward to several improvements, including new study lounges, kitchens and laundry rooms on each floor, as well as electrical and plumbing upgrades. In addition, air conditioning is being added, and residents will have control of the heating and cooling settings in their rooms.

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An online update form is available at http://alumni.truman.edu/. Include information on a seasonal address in the “Other Information” box found at the end of the online form.

“Take risks. Give more, and expect more in return. Do what’s right, not just what’s legal. Help the poor see that there is a better future. Respect your elders. Dance and sing. Play hard, but play fair. Work hard the first half of your life, so you won’t have to work as hard the second half. Believe in yourself, and others will believe in you. Be generous with your time and with your assets. Never stop learning. Never stop growing. Never stop caring.”

— Truman alumnus Steven W. Rose ('69), of Potomac, Md., an agent with State Farm Insurance, from the Commencement address he presented to Truman’s December graduating class, Dec. 16, 2006.
After switching from a much larger, and impersonal, university where I was a journalism major, to Truman following my freshman year of college, I was left with a slight dilemma: I knew that I wanted to somehow be involved in athletics, I knew that I still wanted to write and I absolutely knew that in no way did I want to write for a newspaper. I had been there and done that on a major scale for one of the largest and most prestigious college newspapers in the country, and while it was thrilling at times, it was in no way what I truly wanted to do as a career for the next 40 to 50 years.

I was at a crossroads: I had switched majors upon enrolling at Truman before my sophomore year, and I was now going to study exercise science. But, what could I do with that exactly? I had always known that I wanted to be involved in athletics somehow; that I wanted to be a part of sports, even if I was not the greatest athlete. I also knew that I was a fairly good writer, or I at least thought that I was, and that I did not want to just throw this talent away. There had to be a way to combine these two passions and find what I really wanted to do for my future professional career.

Luckily, one day while searching through Truman’s eRecruiting Web site, I came across an ad for a student assistant job in the Athletics Media Relations Office. The position combined a passion for sports with an equally strong passion for writing, and more importantly, excellent communication and sport management skills, two areas that I was beginning to become quite fond of through my exercise science studies. I immediately applied for the job, despite the fact that at the time, I did not have any collegiate media relations/sports information experience on my resume. Fortunately for me, my strong journalism background came in handy, and I was offered the position. Needless to say, that one great opportunity has truly changed my life.

I am now in my second year as a student assistant in the Athletics Media Relations Office at Truman, and working under the direction of Kevin White, assistant athletics director for communications and operations, and Daniel Newton, former media relations coordinator, has given me both the experience and the passion for the profession that I know will serve me well for my future endeavors as a sports information director. I have grown from someone who was inexperienced and naïve in regards to the profession when I first started, to someone who now considers himself a fully integrated member of the sports information field, one who seeks to continue to develop his skills in an increasingly more difficult and more technological career field.

What I really enjoy most about the profession is the sense of satisfaction that I get when athletes achieve some form of greatness, such as winning the 200-meter dash in an indoor track and field race in the middle of February, and I get to write about it, and thus, tell the world of the great accomplishments these student-athletes are achieving. It is truly remarkable for me to witness an athlete come into Truman as a young freshman, naïve to the environment that now surrounds him or her, and even more so, unaccustomed to the major jump that is college athletics, and then see this kid grow, both physically and mentally to the point where he or she is now the start of a team. It is then my job to promote and publicize his or her accomplishments, along with those of many other Truman athletes, in an attempt to hopefully let others who are outside of our world that is Kirksville, Mo., learn about and appreciate the many remarkable things that Truman students do on a daily basis.

Working with Truman’s athletes and working in the Athletics Media Relations Office has truly been one of the best experiences in my three years at Truman. While I have only worked in the office and in the position for two years, I know that the knowledge and the experiences that I have gained through my work will stay with me for a lifetime. Hopefully someday, when I am running my own sports information office at a university, I will be able to give back to my student workers as much as my bosses have given to me.

Keith Trivitt
Keith Trivitt, a senior exercise science major from Springfield, Mo., shares his experience working as a student assistant in the Athletics Media Relations Office at Truman.
Avoid making a faux pas during a business lunch or dinner by following some basic rules of etiquette.

Increasingly, meals are included as part of the process of interviewing for a job. Whether you're seeking employment with an organization or wish to be promoted with your current employer, it is important to understand the nuances of dining etiquette. A prospective employer is eyeing your ability to represent that organization, whether you'll be dining with clients, co-workers, colleagues from other companies, or other professionals in your community.

There are cultural implications here: much of the world considers the American style of dining to be crass. If your work involves dining with individuals of other cultures, be sure you are given proper training so that you do not embarrass yourself or your organization.

While there are lots of rules for proper dining, many of which are easy to forget, there are really only two rules that must be observed at all times. When engaged in a business meal, never say anything derogatory about the restaurant, food, or wait staff. If you must address a problem with your meal, such as improperly cooked meat, do so in a discreet and respectful manner. Second, never point out someone else's etiquette faux pas during a meal. If you are the supervisor of someone whom you've witnessed displaying bad manners, address this issue with your employee in private.

Here are some general etiquette rules:

- In the U.S., the primary place setting used is outside-in; the outermost utensils are used first.
- Food is passed counter-clockwise around the table.
- Offer to pass food and drink around the table to everyone else before serving yourself.
- At a sit-down dinner, wait until everyone at your table has been served to begin eating.
- Always taste your food before seasoning it.
- Salt and pepper are always sent around the table together.
- When eating soup, move soupspoon away from you and sip silently.
- Don't break crackers into your soup.
- Don't hold a cracker in one hand and a soup spoon in the other — take a bit of cracker, put it down, and then pick up your soupspoon.
- A soup bowl should never be tilted and should only be picked up if it has handles on it.
- Only cut one piece of meat at a time.
- Break off a single piece of bread, butter and eat it, rather than buttering an entire roll at one time.
- Tuck paper trash under the rim of your plate or on the edge of the saucer or butter plate.

No matter where you are in your career, the University Career Services has resources to help you. Visit the Career Center Web site at http://career.truman.edu/ or e-mail careers@truman.edu.
As a child growing up in Glenwood, Mo., Debra Kerby never got the opportunity to learn to swim. Today, she can be found swimming laps in the University natatorium a couple of days a week before most of the campus has even awakened. Learning to swim as an adult not only marked a personal milestone in Kerby's life, it also taught her something about her students.

When bad knees forced Kerby to discontinue running, she was forced to seek out a new form of exercise — her doctor recommended swimming. When she told him she didn't know how to swim, he suggested that maybe it was time for her to learn. Accepting the challenge, she enrolled in one of the swimming classes offered through the University, and on the first day in the pool, the instructor asked the students to demonstrate their swimming skills. “They all took out swimming, and I'm just standing there in the shallow end, and he says 'go ahead and show me what you can do,'” says Kerby. “I said I am showing you.” However, thanks to the patience of her instructor, she was swimming the length of the pool by the end of the semester.

Not only did she learn to swim, she also picked up another important lesson. Before her swimming experience, Kerby, who has been teaching undergraduate and graduate accounting courses at Truman since 1982, says she would often wonder why some students didn't ask more questions in class or come by her office for help. However, after being the one who was the novice in the swimming class, she knew how it felt to know absolutely nothing about a subject matter, and more importantly, she understood how a student might be too proud to admit they didn't understand the material.

In the classroom, Kerby likes to use a variety of activities and approaches so that there may be something that different students can grasp onto in order to learn, and as an advocate of the “case method,” she often uses Harvard Business School types of cases to help students develop their research and analytical skills. In the undergraduate courses, Kerby tends to use cases that are focused on a particular issue, while in the graduate-level courses, she will use a realistic case setting that has more ambiguity and complexity and deals with multiple issues. “They really have to sort through what is relevant and try to pull together resources, information, and knowledge in a multitude of disciplines and perspectives to address a case,” says Kerby, who received the Walker and Doris Allen Fellowship for Faculty Excellence in 2004 in recognition of her contributions to the success of the University and its students.

“Many of the students in our accounting classes are surprised, at least initially, on how much writing they are asked to do, and in some cases, how much speaking they are asked to do because they do not think of accounting as a communication medium,” says Kerby. In the past, accountants were sometimes referred to as bean counters or number crunchers, but now much of that type of work is done through technology and automation. Kerby says today's accountants may be dealing with financial information that they will have to interpret for others or be able to explain the data in a language that someone who is not a financial expert can actually understand.

Kerby admits she has high standards and says that one comment that crops up on her course evaluations by students is that she is “picky.” “But then I will hear back from students later on who appreciate the fact that they had to do a lot of writing in my class...or at least more writing than in the typical accounting class.”

Kerby often receives e-mails from former students and will never forget one surprising message she received a few summers ago. “It was from an international student I had in class, and I had served as his advisor; in the e-mail, he indicated that they had named their daughter after me,” says Kerby, who even received a photo of her namesake.

Along with her fellow colleagues, Kerby takes great pride in the success of all the students who pass through Violette Hall, home of Truman's Division of Business and Accountancy, and she is especially proud of the accreditation of the Division. The programs at Truman have earned a reputation for producing outstanding accounting students who have ranked in the top five or higher of all schools in the nation for the last five years for passing all parts of the CPA examination on the first time around. In addition, Truman students have scored in the top five percent of all students whose business knowledge was tested on the Major Field Test in Business.