Conference Showcases Student Research

Truman students don’t have to wait until graduate school to be part of groundbreaking research; students at all academic levels and from all academic disciplines can participate in Truman’s Undergraduate Research Conference, a University-wide Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Achievement. On April 3, nearly 400 student presentations were conducted in concurrent sessions held throughout the day in the Ophelia Parrish Building and Violette Hall.

The annual Student Research Conference provides an opportunity for both undergraduate and graduate students to present research they have conducted under the guidance of Truman faculty. Classes are postponed for the day allowing students to present their research in a public forum before their colleagues, friends, and faculty.

One of the conference highlights included the plenary address titled “Sharing the Experience of Science” presented by Steven L. Snyder, vice president of Exhibit and Program Development at The Franklin Institute. Snyder joined the staff of the Franklin Institute in 2001 after serving as the director of science and director of attraction development at the Science City at Union Station/Kansas City Science Museum.

Laura Naegle was one of the 389 students who presented their research at the 21st annual Student Research Conference.

Mark your calendar for upcoming events on campus

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Truman Forensics Faculty and Students Blaze New Trails in Beijing

While athletes from around the world work to prepare for the pinnacle of athletic achievement at the August Beijing Olympics, forensics students and communication faculty traveled to China’s capital in May to assist in China’s own national debate championships and to lay the groundwork for possible academic exchanges between debate and communication programs at Truman State University and in the People’s Republic.

Truman students Christopher Girouard, a senior communication major from Chesterfield, Mo., and Mark Buchheit, a junior history major from Carthage, Mo., joined Assistant Professor Kristopher Stroup and Communication Department Chair Elizabeth Clark as adjudicators for the 12th FLTRP Cup English Language Debating Competition. Kevin Minch, associate professor of communication and director of forensics, served as a trainer for the event, helping with two days of pre-tournament seminars for Chinese students and coaches. This is Minch’s second year serving as a trainer for the event.

The group’s visit was punctuated by both elation and heartbreak. The team arrived just days after the devastating earthquake in China’s Sichuan province and participated in observances commemorating the tragedy and honoring the sacrifice of several teams from the battered region who struggled to make their way to Beijing for the tournament. At the same time, the group benefited from enriching cultural experiences in both the city and the surrounding suburbs.

Minch joined a panel of celebrity judges for the final round of the tournament, including noted Chinese English language scholars, a leading Chinese news anchor, and government officials. Honored guests at the event included the British ambassador, China’s last foreign minister, the secretary general for the EU Chamber of Commerce, and a representative of the U.S. Embassy.

“‘In many ways, the Chinese take their national championship far more seriously than we do in America,’” noted Minch. “‘It really is a celebration, with lots of pomp and circumstance, significant investment from corporate and academic sponsors, and notable recognition from the government. Their academic, political, and community leaders truly value the work these students are doing. The dedication is stunning!’”

The connection between Chinese debaters and Truman students and faculty appears to be just beginning. The personal bonds formed during the trip were significant, but Clark and Minch are confident in a great deal more. “We have set the foundation stones for what could eventually become two or three ongoing exchange programs in debate and communication,” Minch explained. “While it’s too early to say for certain what will develop, we’ve had several very fruitful conversations, and Chinese students, faculty, and administrators seem very eager to find ways to collaborate — including exchanges of students and faculty for lectures, exhibition debates, and more.”

In the midst of a fundraising effort as part of the Truman State University Foundation’s “Bright Minds, Bright Futures” campaign, the China initiative couldn’t be better timed. One of the Forensic Union’s goals is to increase financial resources in support of international learning and competitive opportunities for students in speech and debate.

New Student Representative Appointed to the Board of Governors

Gov. Matt Blunt appointed Cody Sumter of Warrensburg, Mo., as the new student representative to the Truman State University Board of Governors. Sumter fills the expired term of Emily Kiddoo of Memphis, Mo., who graduated in May.

Sumter is a junior computer science major with minors in physics and philosophy. He is a member of the Residence Hall Association, West Campus Suites Hall Senate, Omicron Delta Kappa, Baptist Student Union, the Association of Computing Machinery, and Stargazers.
Truman students are making a difference in the local community through service-learning projects that not only fill a need in the community, but also provide a practical setting where students can utilize the theoretical knowledge they learn in the classroom. One example is a group of students who participated in the “Grassroots Environmentalism” course at Truman.

Working with Nancy Tate, the activity director of the Kirksville Manor Care Center (KMCC), three students organized a project to build a raised garden for the KMCC residents. KMCC already had an existing garden on the premises that Tate uses to promote fun, stimulating activities that allow the residents to interact with the environment and nature; the service-learning project was designed to extend these activities to the residents who may not be physically capable of bending over a garden and would otherwise not be able to participate in the gardening process.

The project was conducted to fulfill the service-learning component of “Grassroots Environmentalism,” an experimental course that is centered on the service-learning experience. Students in the class split into groups at the beginning of the semester and chose a local environmentally-related problem or issue to address through a service-learning project. During the 16-week semester, each student group identified an issue, developed a project idea and submitted a proposal to address the issue. They then implemented the project.

The primary goal of the course is to provide an opportunity for students to gain practical, hands-on experience in leading a project from its conception to its completion. The course helps students develop the tools they will need for future project development in either their professional or service endeavors.

“I cannot explain the thrill that I experienced as I watched the residents take the project off the paper and start its growth at the planting program,” said student Kati Kremer, who was part of the three-member team planning and implementing the raised-gardening project at KMCC. “The excitement I felt every time I visited Manor Care to check on the seedlings reminded me of how far my group had come since we first chose our project idea.”

The student group also arranged for the existing, traditional garden at KMCC to be cleaned up as one of the projects for the Big Event, an annual daylong service activity that allows Truman students to show appreciation for the support of the local community by volunteering to assist Kirksville residents. The Big Event takes place in the spring, and services that the students provide range from raking leaves to washing windows to painting.
Professors Receive Allen Fellowships for Faculty Excellence

In April, University President Barbara Dixon, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Garry Gordon, and Vice President for University Advancement Mark Gambaiana made surprise visits to the classrooms of three faculty to announce the recipients of the 2008 Walker and Doris Allen Fellowship. The fellowship recognizes outstanding faculty members who have greatly contributed to the success of the University. Each of the three fellowship recipients, Janet Gooch, associate professor and department chair of Communication Disorders; Sara Orel, professor of art; and Fred Shaffer, professor of psychology, was presented with a $10,000 check.

Gooch joined the faculty in 1995 and assumed the responsibilities of Communication Disorders Department chair in 2004. She obtained her bachelor of arts in speech pathology from the University of Kansas, master of arts in speech pathology from Kent State University, and her Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Orel has been at Truman State University since 1991. She earned her A.B. from Bryn Mawr College in classical and Near Eastern archaeology, and her M.A. and Ph.D., both from the University of Toronto, are in Egyptian archaeology.

Shaffer has been at Truman since 1975. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Claremont Men’s College and a master’s and doctorate from Oklahoma State University.

Truman alumnus Walker Allen and his wife, Doris, established the Fellowship seven years ago with one of the largest outright gifts ever made to the Truman State University Foundation, and the fellowship is awarded annually. Walker Allen graduated from Truman State University (then Northeast Missouri State Teachers College) in 1939 with a B.S.E. degree in business education.

Math Professor Named Educator of the Year

James Guffey, professor of mathematics, was named as Truman State University’s 2008 Educator of the Year at the 19th annual banquet held on campus April 28.

Guffey, who began his career at Truman in 1988, received his bachelor of science from Centre College of Kentucky and his master of science and doctorate from Missouri University of Science and Technology, formerly University of Missouri-Rolla.

This year students nominated 91 faculty members for the Educator of the Year award. Professors who accepted the nomination had to submit written responses to the Educator of the Year Committee, then the eight-member student committee first narrowed the group of 34 professors down to 12 semi-finalists and then to six finalists.

Students from Student Government, the Pershing Society and Phi Kappa Phi serve on the Educator of the Year Committee.

Kimberly Burgess presented the 2008 Educator of the Year award to James Guffey, professor of mathematics.
“I think given the fact that this is Truman State University and I am Harry Truman’s grandson and you are Truman graduates, my job here today is to try to pass on to you what my grandfather might have told you. And I can think of five things, namely – which is probably doing him a disservice, he would probably say a lot more here himself – the five things I can think of…

First, be learned. You’re already on a good start for that, but he meant learned throughout your whole lives….

…Second thing is be strong, be tough…

…Also, work hard, but remember it’s just a job…

…The fourth thing he would say is stick to your principles, be principled…

…The last thing I think my grandfather would say to you is always, always be yourself. Be true to yourself no matter what, be happy with yourself, be comfortable in your own skin, and be proud of that…”

— CLIFTON TRUMAN DANIEL, from the Commencement address he presented to Truman’s graduating class in Stokes Stadium on May 10. Daniel, who is the oldest grandson of former President Harry S. Truman, is the director of public relations for Harry S. Truman College.
Library Plans Fall 2008 Book Sale

Pickler Memorial Library staff are planning for the 3rd annual Library Book Sale to be held on campus Sept. 23-25, 2008. Proceeds from this year’s sale will support Library programs and collections as well as the Children’s Literature Festival which will be held on campus in April 2009 – the Festival will bring 10 authors to campus and host activities for approximately 1,400 area children.

The generosity of friends and alumni who donated books, music, magazines, and other items made last year’s sale a great success – more than 7,000 items were sold and $3,600 was raised. Proceeds from the 2007 sale went to purchase books for the Library in memory of Robert E. Cummings, professor emeritus of history, who passed away in December 2006.

If you would like to donate materials for the Book Sale, please contact the Library Dean’s Office at (660) 785-4038 for information regarding delivery or local pick-up. For more information visit http://library.truman.edu/BookSale.htm.

Leading the Way in Literacy

The First Book organization at Truman State University, which includes both students and faculty, provided 1,572 brand new books to children enrolled in local Head Start programs.

The children and their families attended a literacy fair sponsored by the organization and the Northeast Missouri Community Action Agency, and each child received a bundle of eight or nine books, provided at no cost to the families or centers.

The First Book organization at Truman works to promote and facilitate the distribution of new books to children of literacy programs in the Kirksville area. The organization is part of First Book’s national network of volunteer-led Advisory Boards who provide new books to children in need in communities across the country.

First Book is a nonprofit organization that gives children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. In neighborhoods across the country, First Book Advisory Boards unite leaders from all sectors of the community to provide books to children in literacy programs, shelters for battered children, housing project initiatives, soup kitchens, after-school programs and other community-based efforts reaching children living at or below the poverty line. Since its inception in 1992, First Book has distributed more than 50 million new books to children in need in hundreds of communities nationwide.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hannah Kay, a senior Russian major from Springfield, Ill., has been offered a Fulbright Grant to Russia for the 2008-2009 academic year. Established in 1946 under Congressional legislation introduced by the late Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, the program is designed “to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries.”

Chris Dove, a senior biology and philosophy and religion double major from Chesterfield, Mo., was among the recipients of the 2008 Goldwater Scholarships. Austin Abrams, a junior computer science major from Champaign, Ill., received an honorable mention. The Goldwater scholars were selected on the basis of academic merit from a field of 1,035 mathematics, science and engineering students who were nominated by the faculties of colleges and universities nationwide.

More than 58 million pounds of recyclables and organics were recovered from 400 colleges and universities participating in the nationwide RecycleMania 2008, and Truman placed third in the overall “Per Capita Classic” category. Truman's Recycling Center provides services for the surrounding communities and accepts paper, plastic, aluminum cans, all glass, corrugated cardboard, printer cartridges, books, and brown paper bags.