**Academic Affairs Committee Report 2016-2017**

Remy McClain, Chair

Sarah Holtmeyer

Deanna Schmidt

Department Chair Interviews

At the beginning of the year, each member of the Academic Affairs Committee sat down with a Department Chair to ask questions about the current state of their department, such as current projects, what was going well, and to ask about any problems they were facing and if Academic Affairs could help to address those issues. This was an excellent way to begin the year in order to both cultivate a relationship between the committee and the department chairs and to better understand the current state of all academic departments across the university.

Online Office Hours

The committee wanted to investigate the possibility of professors posting their office hours online so that students could more readily access this information. The idea was taken to the Provost who then took it to the department chairs and deans. These individuals voiced some concerns of having their office hours online for the general public to see; namely, that individuals outside of Truman could then enter their office hours at any time. In further conversations with the Provost we came up with the idea to have a link for office hours next to the professor's information that is connected to Truman's internal net. After further conversations with department chairs, the provost informed the committee that each department was implementing the information themselves, and leaving it up to each professor whether they wanted the information on the internal net or not. By the end of the year, a few departments had posted office hours online with a link for students to log in to TruView in order to access the information.

Emergency Procedures

The committee hoped to implement a system of professors relaying emergency procedures at the beginning of the year, mainly because each building and classroom on campus is different, with varying protocols based on different situations, including fires, tornadoes, and active shooters. This idea was brought to the Provost, who is in the process of working out the details. In the last discussions with the Provost, he voiced concerns of department chairs and deans that if this is done on the first day of class each semester, attendance could be very low. This is, however, something that he would like to discuss more to potentially put into action, so follow-up with the Academic Affairs Office should continue in the future.

Library Hours

With an end goal in mind of extending Pickler Library hours, Academic Affairs Committee Chair Remy McClain continued speaking with administrators and library personnel at the beginning of the year to further a discussion that began the previous year. Current hours are as follows:

7:30 A.M.-1:00 A.M. Monday-Thursday

7:30 A.M.-9:00 P.M. Friday

11:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M. Saturday

11:00 A.M.-1:00 A.M. Sunday

The library communicated to the committee that hours are extended until 2:00 A.M. every finals week and the week before each finals week. Some major concerns raised by administration about long-term extension of hours, however, were issues of money and previous statistics of traffic in the library: namely, that the current hours served the greatest majority of the students’ needs, and financially, it was not feasible to extend the hours. After extensive communication with the library this year, the hope is that hours will be extended during mid-term week in the future, so future committee members should contact the library to assess if the situation has changed at all in this regard.

Ray Miller

Committee member Sarah Holtmeyer continued to work on a project with Ray Miller Elementary School from the previous academic year, attempting to form a partnership between the committee and the school. After trying to create a tutoring program to pair Truman students with students in grades 2-5 who need extra help in literacy and mathematics, difficulty in contacting the principal of the school ultimately ended in the discontinuing of the project.

Food Bank

Towards the end of the first semester the Academic Affairs Committee looked towards addressing the possibility of having Sodexo meals donated every week. The committee reached out to Laura Cunningham, the Director of Sodexo, about the possibility and the process that we could go though. This is a discussion that has been ongoing for over a year. After, one meeting with Cunningham, she reached out to Academic Affairs Chair Remy McClain with a new idea. Some college campuses have on campus food banks for student use. The idea was that students could donate their meals to help other students. This is still an ongoing process and communication with sodexo should continue in the next year. A survey to assess student need went out at the end of the second semester. Visit survey.truman.edu to view results and decide the next step.

Educator of the Year

The committee began the Educator and Research Mentor of the Year process by preemptively planning deadlines for each step of the process before leaving for winter break in December. After collaborating on poster designs, the committee finally decided on the theme of “Truman’s Next Top Educator,” and worked with Laura Bates to send the final design idea to print 50 posters.

After returning in January, the committee distributed posters to various buildings across campus, but encountered difficulty hanging up posters through the Residence Hall Association (RHA) because of a new policy prohibiting the distribution of promotional material not containing specific dates or times of an event in the residence halls.

Once the posters were distributed, the committee planned for students to have about two weeks to submit nominations, with nominations due online on February 10th. With nominations open through a Google form that linked directly to the Chair’s G-mail account, the responses were easily accessible throughout the process. The committee received a total of 55 nominations, and after the initial nominations, the committee narrowed the pool of educators down to 30 semi-finalists and the pool of research mentors to 5 semi-finalists. The committee then emailed these individuals and asked them to respond to the following prompt:

*“What is your personal mission statement and how do you use it to inspire your students in your academic endeavors?”*

From these esary responses, we selected ten finalists for Educator of the Year to observe in the classroom and set up times to interview the five finalists for Research Mentor of the Year. We selected a representative from the McNair program and Pershing Society to work on the selection committee. We attended classroom observations and interviews, found a time to deliberate, and finally selected one Educator of the Year and one Research Mentor: Dr. Anton Daughters and Dr. Michael Bird, respectively.

In terms of the banquet, we ordered food from Sodexo approximately 4 weeks in advance. This was the menu, as described by Sodexo:

Marinated chicken breast

Roasted potatoes

Seasoned green beans

Rolls, butter

Ice water

Lemonade

Apple pie

Chocolate cake

Tossed salads with tomatoes, Ranch, Italian, and French dressings

It was a served meal, rather than buffet-style as in past years, and guests informed us afterwards that they preferred being served.

We reached out to President Sue Thomas to speak at the banquet in advance, and she agreed. We also invited all finalists, past winners, administration, deans, chairs, and students who submitted nominations. We made certificates for every finalist and the winners of both awards by going through the publications department (contact: Winston Vander-Hoof (ad96@truman.edu)). When announcing the winners, we read portions of their essays and the nominations from their students.

Advice for Future Chair: Start the process early. Communicate with Laura Bates starting in november to get advertisements ordered. This way they can be up right when the second semester started. Work to advertise in new ways as well. The more nominations, the better.

Administrative Report:

Academic Affairs Chair Remy McClain, held regular meetings with Interim Provost Richard Coughlin. These meetings are very helpful and gives the committee the chance to communicate with administration. Many of our projects through the year could not have been accomplished without the help of administration. Contact DeeDee Moore to set up an appointment with the provost.