

Truman State University  
Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee 2016-2017 Report  
Chair and Report Author: Clarissa Todd  
Current members: Quinlin Brown, Kaleb Patania  
Past Members: Jacob Breese, Korbin Keller

**Committee Purpose:**

This year was the second year of the Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee (HWS) existing. I initially was an opponent of this committee being created as it was created with the intention of solely addressing concussion issues. Due to the events of this past year and the changing political climate, though, I do believe there exists a purpose for this committee quite separate from its original intentions. With the Student Affairs committee drifting more into facility and resource availability based issues, the overall wellness related side of campus has a need to be better addressed. This allows for the Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee to attack a wide variety of issues, ranging from student health to security measures. While I believe this year this committee does exist with a purpose, I still am not fully convinced this committee is worthwhile in that all of these issues *can* be covered by Student Affairs. On a body this small, really I think the larger the committee the better. As this report will show, this committee was largely ineffective this year due to a small, fluctuating committee of inexperienced members. Conversely, I believe Student Affairs could instead be the committee on the chopping block as everything they cover could almost always fall within the purview of another committee or External Affairs as the vast majority of the community outreach performed in this committee could be accomplished by individual committees, the Executive Cabinet, or the Legislative Director.

**Yearly Synopsis:**

This year had a plethora of issues facing the Truman community that fell within the realm of HWS. The main ones included: individuals dressing up in clowns and scaring and threatening community members, changes in gun laws effective January 1, three (at the time of writing this report suspected but not yet all confirmed) suicides within one fraternity, an outbreak of mumps, and suicides and a homicide in the Kirksville community.

At the beginning of the semester, I met with Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Gilchrist to discuss where HWS could be headed. She discussed wanting to gear the overall message more towards positive psychology. For the most part, we agreed with this idea up until events occurred on campus, at which point we decided to gear the message much more to resource promotion. It became apparent that while students are still waiting weeks to be seen at University Counseling Services, they are unaware of what exists. We attempted to address this by tabling once a semester during more stressful times (finals first semester; midterms second semester) and by

creating an overall community resource packet and pamphlet. As for the former, we paired with the President's Wellness Committee in order to hand out the following: resource pamphlets, hot chocolate, HWS stress balls/bones, coloring pages, tissues, and hand sanitizer. Based on our distribution of hot chocolate, I would estimate that we averaged 300-350 students stopping by each time we tabled. When it comes to the latter, a member of the committee used pre-existing resource lists to compile a master packet, calling the groups to discuss insurance acceptance, when applicable. This resource packet was not put together until near the end of second semester, so it still has great potential to be used and distributed. From this packet, I selected several health-specific resources in order to create a pamphlet that was distributed at the second tabling. No official conversation have occurred about distributing the packet or pamphlet in other groups, however I had a test run with my sorority, Delta Phi Epsilon, where several women said they found it useful, and a few SAs have looked over and asked to use the pamphlet.

Our main partnerships this year were with the President's Wellness Committee and Truman Partners in Prevention (MOPIP), but neither were especially fruitful. The Wellness Committee representative first semester was Korbin, who left for an internship. Due to my own class schedule and the body as a whole's refusal to volunteer, we did not have a Student Government representative on the committee second semester. This resulted in a somewhat strained relationship as first semester Korbin had promised the Wellness Committee that they could send a survey out through Student Government, but the communication broke down without a representative and therefore the survey still has yet to be sent out (though is scheduled to be sometime this week). This survey consists primarily of questions about students awareness and use of healthy food options and fitness options. Our partnership with MOPIP was largely just attending their meetings and voting to help fund organizations. First semester I was the Student Government representative, second semester it was Quinlin. One very helpful resource MOPIP provided, though, was the data in the yearly Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) which can be found on [trumanpip.truman.edu](http://trumanpip.truman.edu)

We addressed a wide-variety of other issues based on current events happening in Missouri and the Kirksville community. With the changing gun laws (specifically the ability to conceal and carry without a permit), we had planned to host an event explaining these changes and how they would impact students. While working on this project, we were coordinating with Director of Public Safety Sara Holzmeier. This event ultimately was not put on due to timing and the main coordinator, Korbin, not setting the event fully up before going on an internship. Another event that was planned but not put on was an Active Listening seminar, to be taught by a caseworker of University Counseling Services. This would have been a mental health support event based on how to support your friends without needing to be mental health first aid certified.

Some other issues we looked into without much headway included: attendance policy with regards to health and athletics, concussions, campus lighting, ADA compliance, spirituality week, and holes in sidewalks and streets.

At the end of the semester, Dr. Gilchrist and I met again to discuss mental health efforts on campus. As she is retiring this summer, she was compiling notes from various sources to pass on to her successor. Most of the suggestions I provided to her are included in my “Projects Looking Forward” portion of this report.

### **Difficulties and Remedies:**

As can likely already be ascertained from this report, the committee as a whole faced several struggles in working to address the many issues we needed to. The four main issues we faced were: fluctuating committee membership, inexperience, massive issues with poor coordination, and personal connection to the project and personal life difficulties. When it comes to fluctuating committee membership, the first semester we had three committee members, only one of whom would remain a full committee member going into the second semester. This meant that many projects were half completed without enough information to carry the project on into the next semester and that there was little time for new projects to begin and be carried out. The second main issue was inexperience: having a committee consist of entirely inexperienced or minimally experienced members meant that, especially second semester, for the vast majority of projects I could not even take on an advisor role - instead I had to walk my committee members by hand into not only knowing what to do and how to do it, but also literally getting them to do it. These first two issues I believe could be resolved by increasing the membership on committees, whether that be by simply increasing membership on the body or by eliminating a standing committee in order to increase committee membership. The third main issue our committee faced was having massive issues with poor coordination, especially with regards to mental health. Though Truman has, at least during my time here, had significant mental health issues, no one expected this year to have such a massive increase in issues. This resulted in many new campus groups and existing campus groups all hurriedly attempting to address an extremely complicated and large issue without any clear leading force. While this meant that many more events were put on to address mental health, ultimately, I do not believe much headway was made on the overall problem. To better address this, I would recommend having either the future chair or a member of the committee be mainly in charge of coordination efforts and discussing projects with other groups. Our final issue was more of a major issue for me that made it very difficult to successfully be the chair of this committee. With many of the issues our committee was to address this year, I had personal connections to the issue that made it difficult for me to remove myself from the situation and act as a student leader instead of simply as a person. Additionally,

my family faced significant problems this year which has required to be home more often and resulted in my unfortunate distraction from my duties as chair.

### **Projects Looking Forward:**

The future of this committee really should focus on mental health resource promotion efforts and safety features that are often overlooked until they are no longer working. The following are bullet points of potential projects/suggestions not already included in this document:

- Lighting
  - Campus does replace street light bulbs when they are notified that the lights are out, however there are still areas of campus that poorly lit at night and parking lot lights will occasionally just not be on (I'd estimate 2-3 times per semester; I've heard of Campbell Apartments, Centennial Hall, and Ryle Hall all having parking lot lighting out)
- Pathways and roads having holes
- Mental health resource promotion and coordination with other groups
  - This should also include events for students to learn how to be supportive for one another without necessarily needing to be certified
- Working alongside the new Vice President of Student Affairs on mental health issues
- Working to incorporate more mental health education efforts into Truman Transitions
  - Ideally, this would manifest in having a discussion similar to that of the Title IX discussion all incoming students are required to attend and having resource information included in the freshmen move-in packets
- Potentially creating a health alert system for off the campus students for issues such as boil orders