

## **Diversity Committee End of Year Report**

Submitted by Chantelle Wimms: 2018-2019 Committee Chair

### **Members:**

Chantelle Wimms (Chair)

Dana Bartch (Associate Senator)

Lizzie Cremer (Voting Senator)

Shania Montúfar (Voting Senator)

Miriana Scatola (Associate Senator)

### **The Year in Review and Some General Notes**

This year went, on a general note, well. We planned different events with several levels of exposure to inclusive thinking throughout the year. The events have a nice range of type. The main obstacle we found was awareness of students on the committee, this is probably the reason why the events planned did not see as many participants as we expected. We had two projects. One that got completed and the other that is still ongoing. Both projects well received. Hopefully, they both become more permanent features of Truman as time progresses. The president's roundtable was a mild success for the diversity committee. There quite a bit of diversity-related organizations that did not show up but those that did were very helpful in gauging what is important to students regarding diversity. We planned to have a follow-up meeting with those organizations but it didn't happen due to poor timing. We also got to see how the opposite side of the spectrum was feeling about diversity. The answers were not surprising. Moving forward, within this organization and all others that students may be involved in, make it a priority to make all members feel like they have a place to share ideas and feel included by others. If this group is able to make everyone feel like they have a role and voice, then it will only be stronger in the future. If we want the best projects, teamwork, and want members to return the following year, everyone should feel included.

### **Projects**

#### **3D Printed Map**

Status: Ongoing/stalled

People to Contact: Amanda Langendoerfer ([alang@truman.edu](mailto:alang@truman.edu))

Description: Working with the admission office and art department to get a student to create a 3D printed map with braille legend. The idea is that a visiting student with a vision impairment will still be able to find their way around campus without the help of many able-bodied students will just think it is aesthetically pleasing. The plan is for this 3D printed map to be held in the Ruth W. Towne Museum and Visitor Center. The art department was reached out to (Prof. Aaron Fine) about possibly offering this as an art student's capstone project or extra credit, but no word was received. Melody Chambers, previous director of admissions, was also contacted and stated that the admissions program was supportive of this project. Some questions to find answers to: (1) What are the plans for maintenance/updates? (2) When will a prototype be ready?

#### **Complete list of gender neutral and accessible Bathrooms**

Status: Complete

Description: Gender neutral and accessible bathrooms were located and documented across the entire campus: residence halls and academic buildings. The list of buildings includes: Baldwin Hall, Barnett Hall, Blanton Nason Brewer Hall, Dobson Hall, the McKinney Center, Missouri Hall, Student Recreation Center, Ryle Hall, Student Union Building, West Campus Suites, Centennial Hall, Health Sciences Building, the Kirk Building, Magruder Hall, Ophelia Parrish Hall, Pershing Hall, Pickler Memorial Library, Violette Hall, Stokes Stadium, and the Ruth W. Towne Museum and Visitor Center. The actual paper did not use directions like North or South but rather the relative proximity of the bathroom to another noticeable thing. The reason for this being they don't teach directions like that in school so we feared the next generation of students would not understand where the bathroom is if we put that. This project was completed on November 13, 2018. This document is available on the student government website. Here is the link to the official document <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NrUJH8CHFp3dzQo0HikucMblf1uRXkqjYKlqhUyeVz0/edit?usp=sharing>

## **Events**

### **Speaker: Symone Sanders**

Date: March 21 @ 6:00 PM

Location: OP Performance Hall

Description: Symone Sanders, Bernie Sanders PR director from the 2016 election, came to campus to talk about being a radical activist in everyday life. She brought up her life during the election and how discrimination doesn't care how famous you are. She talked about bridging the political gap on college campuses.

### **Working Around the World**

Date: March 22 @ 6 PM

Location: SUB Alumni Room

Description: Partnered with the Career Center, who came and gave a presentation on how students can plan to work abroad in the future. Topics included: picking which cities you want to live in, how to network and find companies to work for abroad, formatting resumes for different countries, and interviewing skills.

### **Disabilities Panel**

Date: March 25 @ PM

Location: SUB Activities Room

Description: A panel featuring Truman students with disabilities discussing their experience with disability. Topics included accessibility at Truman and the unique challenges each person experiences due to their disability.

### **Hip Hop Trivia**

Date: March 26 @ 6:30 PM

Location: SUB Activities Room

Description: Game of Trivia based in Hip Hop. The game was jeopardy style. The idea was that students will understand how interconnected hip hop has become in everyone's everyday life. There was no prize.

## **Diversity and Inclusion Discussion on Mental Health**

Date: March 27 @ 6pm

Location: SUB Activities Room

Description: Open and inclusive discussion about how mental health touches everybody. The topics were types of mental health problems, therapies, attitudes about mental health in the community as well as what can improve at Truman regarding the topic. The whole discussion went also in depth about diversity so how minority students face the matter of mental health differently from the majority. What kind of hurdles do they encounter while seeking out help or why they do not seek out help at all.

### ***Pariah*: Movie Showing**

Date: March 28 @ 6:30 PM

Location: SUB Activities Room

Description: A movie night with a film about diversity that most people might not have seen or even heard of before, *Pariah*. *Pariah* is a film about a 17-year-old high school girl, Alike, who is coming to terms with her sexuality and learning how to be herself, but trying to figure out how to tell (or hide it from) her parents and friends.

### **Protesting 101**

Date: April 10 @ 7 PM

Location: SUB Activities Room

Description: This was a collaboration with the Women's Resource Center. There was a panel of activists from St. Louis. The discussion was based on questions about protesting and some of the misconceptions people have about it. The purpose of the event was to teach students how to safely and properly protest or respond to protests. The panel was made up of one Truman alumni and her activists' peers. There was also a presentation and some quick learning activities.

### **Resolutions**

*Commentary:* Although there was only one resolution it was important in its own right. Everyone in the diversity committee played an important role in getting it passed as they did with getting the project completed that resolution was based. Writing resolutions was not a priority for this committee at all so seeing one resolution come out of the year is pretty predictable.

### **A Resolution Promoting the Visibility of Gender Neutral and Accessible Bathroom Maps**

The Diversity Committee made a comprehensive list of all of the gender neutral/accessible bathrooms on campus and distributed these lists to several organizations across campus. The resolution is a timeline of this process.

### **Future Project Suggestions**

*Commentary:* Future suggestions are mostly events. The goal is to get a little more controversial in the future because Truman needs that. There are some fun events sprinkled in here too. There are some events the push into intersectionality and its impact on people. Intersectionality type events will become increasingly important at Truman just because the scope of the impact of intersectionality is still not well understood at

Truman. There is no “or” just “and”. There are a little more events around pop culture just because of the way media portrays a group of people is important to understanding struggle. The hope that if these are pointed out students will be able to notice when the pop culture that they engage with is being hurtful instead of helpful. I hope to see more reactionary events that come up because of something happening in the real world. A lot of the students that fall under minority don’t talk about their feelings openly so having a discussion or just a vigil could be very meaningful for those students.

### **Project Suggestion:**

- 1) Diversity Rocks
  - a) People can decorate rocks with encouraging phrases about identity and place them around campus for others to find
- 2) Table Talk
  - a) Round table discussion with a moderator
  - b) All those who participate have to come with questions or topics
  - c) “Help me understand” should be the key phrase in a discussion
- 3) Privilege Walk
  - a) Participants stand in a line in the middle of the room
  - b) A facilitator reads off statements and people are asked to take a step forward or backward
- 4) Shout compliments at people at the fountain
  - a) This area is often used to yell negative things at people so it would be nice to hear people yell nice things
- 5) Environmental Racism
  - a) This could be in conjunction with the environmental chair
  - b) Intersectional thinking on how the world’s treatment of the environment affects POC
    - i) This could be about lead poisoning in Baltimore and Flint but could also be able to the general effects of climate change on these communities
- 6) How Beyoncé became the face of a generation of black excellence
  - a) Relating the idealized version of Beyoncé to Afrofuturism POC want to be viewed
  - b) This would be a great time to collaborate with ABC of how pop culture this conversation/event would be
- 7) Making social media posts recommending movies, literature, music podcasts based on different identity-based months or weeks
  - a) This could potentially be a collaboration with the PR director or even the library
- 8) Event about the majority being complicit in issues facing minorities
  - a) Emphasis on race
  - b) Possibly how to be a good ally again with WRC or other organizations

### **Suggestions for Future Committee Chairs**

#### **Suggestions:**

- **Diversity Week suggestions**

- Because Diversity Week happens in March there never feels like there is enough time to plan. February is a short month and March is interrupted with spring break. If planning is started early, publicity can also be started early to get a better turn out.
- Consider having Diversity Week two weeks after spring break instead of right after to give extra time to do PR stuff.
- Use smaller rooms in the SUB such as Alumni Room or 3202-3204. In the last two years, there has been a noticeable decrease in participation in identity-based programming. Getting a bigger room just makes the small number of people who show up more noticeable so a smaller room will probably be better.
- **Stay informed with what is happening in CDI**
  - Center for Diversity and Inclusion will in a lot of ways be the only way to get in contact with liaison organizations that will not speak to you otherwise. The CDI does a date drawing meeting at the end of each semester. Make sure you show up to this meeting for collaboration opportunities but also so that identity-based events do not overlap and everyone can support each other's events. I have included a link to my notes from Spring '19 [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JFfRuw\\_2gJBXvW\\_VIk3NUWdEpwVCGK0XylGxZpV\\_7Ek/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JFfRuw_2gJBXvW_VIk3NUWdEpwVCGK0XylGxZpV_7Ek/edit?usp=sharing)
  - Check out CDI chartered groups which can really helpful for event or project collaborations
- **Event Planning**
  - When planning identity-based events make sure you are doing research about common terms and phrases. It is incredibly important not to use outdated or possibly hurtful terms which seems simple but these kinds of things are internalized and not everyone knows what they're really saying when they use these terms/phrases.
  - Avoid the three Fs' of diversity at all cost. This means no events that are about food, festivals, fashion. The reason for this is numerous. First of all, there are plenty of organizations already doing a good job of this. They don't need one more. Another reason to avoid these events is because they are barely scratching the surface of culture and globalization. People can go to find this information. It is more meaningful for there to be events that take the three Fs' and dissect how or why some have become social taboos or even dissecting why these are not part of everyday life for individual students. The idea is we need be going much deeper than such and such is a thing. Truman students should be able to think more critically than that.
- **General Suggestions**
  - Take plenty of pictures and videos for the student government social media so that people can know who is actually in student government.
  - Find a way to meet with the president of PRISM in person because it was especially difficult to get in contact with this organization when their input would've very helpful in some cases. This could honestly also be stretched to several organizations that have a hard time answering emails.
  - Update the list of liaison organizations. The contacts have obviously changed as the new year approaches but also a lot of diversity-related organizations are in the chartering phase currently and should be actual clubs by the beginning of the new school year. These new organizations will play a vital role in keeping events holistic of all groups and keeping the people planning the events from making mistakes that will hurt others rather than help them.
  - Get in contact with admissions, specifically Nathan Elder and Shari Fieser.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chantelle Wimms