

End of Year Report

Submitted by Sam Tillman, Secretary

Section 1: Year in Review

Though my tenure was only a few months, it was a busy and exciting time. As I reflect on my time in this position, there are things I am both proud of and that I regret, but overall I look back on a positive and enlightening experience.

First, the good. I was appointed in the middle of the year, and my previous time as a Voting Senator allowed for a relatively smooth transition to the more straightforward aspects of the job, I became adept at transcribing the sometimes vigorous debates of General and Executive Committee meetings, and as time went on, I was able to only spend a short time editing the minutes before sending them out. Though some may have wished for the inclusion of humorous moments in meeting minutes, I did not feel that was most professional representation of the body. Each secretary is free to choose their own style, mine reflected my commitment to presenting what was said in a straightforward manner. In addition to minutes, I was tasked with sending out resolutions to whom they were directed; I usually enjoyed this, but it was occasionally onerous due to the task of tracking down email addresses.

Next, the not so good. I think the majority of my record keeping was up to par. However, there was one case where a member could have been removed for poor attendance, but due to the timing of when things came to a head, as well as my failure to head off the situation prior, this member ultimately remained on the body. If I could do it over again, I would have done more to address the member's attendance before it became a problem, and had the problem persisted in the manner it did, I would have likely brought up the member for removal. Another item which could have been better handled was the updating of the website; some of it was within my control, some of it was not. I was tasked in the middle of the year with updating a website that had not seen updates in over eight months, which made sifting through the backlog an uphill battle. Since I was not personally able to add documents to the website, I was forced to sort through what needed to be removed and added to the website, and give appropriate directions to the Webmaster. This process was confusing for both me and him. I think handing greater autonomy to the Webmaster would aid in this process.

Last, everything else. I greatly enjoyed my time serving as Secretary; though at times stressful and tedious, it was a rewarding job that taught me how to problem-solve, and made me more aware of how the sausage gets made, so to speak, in regard to all the great work that the body does.

Section 2: Projects

Website Updates

Status: Ongoing

As I took over in the middle of the year, there were several things which I was less prepared to take on; one of them was to upload all SG documents to the website and place them in the appropriate places. Due to a hectic schedule, the process of finally updating the website did not begin in earnest until April, and is still ongoing due to the diverging schedules of the webmaster and myself. The process will be complete by the end of the semester.

Record Keeping (Attendance, etc.):

Status: Ongoing

I have aimed to uphold the attendance policies that the body passed early in the year, and I feel I have done so with appropriate discretion, for the most part. There was one case where, perhaps due to a failure on my part to effectively communicate, a member of the body did not seem to have knowledge of his position's requirements for attending meetings and other SG functions. My recommendations to prevent this type of situation in the future is below. To streamline keeping of attendance, I suggest creating a google form to record absences to meetings, and a spreadsheet separate from general attendance for all committee chairs to record their committee attendance. If committee chairs would want to use the google form as well, that would be up to them.

Section 3: Additional Ideas

Campus Recognition

While I would certainly like to get more people involved in Student Government directly, I think indirect involvement is just as important. I still think it is important that members of the body are in the Senate office so that students may ask questions and get face-to-face interaction, but the fact of the matter is that very few students a) know where the office is and b) feel compelled to make a special trip to ask about things. I think this will always be a struggle, given our location and the apathy students have toward SG. I think instead we should do more to reach out to students instead of always expecting them to come to us. A few ideas in that regard:

- ❖ Continue to have an engaging social media presence
 - While we certainly do plenty in this regard, there are couple of specific ways I think we can address our sometimes lacking PR; one would be to posts on the Instagram story with a question/response, so people can ask us questions about specific or nonspecific things. Perhaps as a corollary to administration videos, we can produce similarly-focused videos to give students a more inside view of what we do.
- ❖ Have a separate email dedicated to answering questions
 - Yes, this would create additional bureaucracy, but I think people who are willing to take the time to ask pertinent questions are more apt to use email anyway; also, it would not clutter up the personal inbox of whomever is in charge of it. I also propose that this be posted on the website in lieu of the speaker's personal email, and that it be managed by a member of the executive board. Additionally, I

propose that it be included as a link in each monthly SG email, to encourage students to reach out.

❖ More general tabling

- While this could be difficult to coordinate given the busy schedules of members of the body, I think tabling two or three times a semester (in different campus locations) with the goal of simply being available for interaction and to answer questions could spur more engagement and involvement by the student body at-large.

Google Drive

Our previous method of organizing our documents is rather haphazard in my opinion. On Google Drive, there is a new feature called Team Drive, which I propose that we consider using for 2019-2020. I believe that the Team Drive would enable every document to be accessible to every member of the body at any time, which would reduce time spent fumbling around for documents and more efficient use of meeting time. Additionally, there would be more transparency about what projects are ongoing; I think it is advantageous for all members to be aware of the activities of each committee. While I am unsure what the idiosyncrasies of the Team Drive are, I would hope that sharing settings could be adjusted as needed depending on the nature of each document. One particular document that I would like to see created is one with the contact information for all the people who are likely to be partners on or recipients of Student Government legislation. This may include but not be limited to: members of university administration, executive staff, department chairs, department staff, organizational leaders, and members of the Kirksville community.

Webmaster

The position of Webmaster is relatively new, and as such its role is still being defined. Though some of the issues in making timely website updates lie with me, the fact that the position's responsibilities remain nebulous surely contributed to this lingering problem. I would like to see the next Webmaster be a more active participant on the body, in order that they are more routinely aware of what work is being done by the body and how that should be reflected in the website. Ideally, the Webmaster would attend General meetings so that he or she knows what to expect to add to the website in a given week; any number of resolutions, minutes, applications, etc. Additionally, I think it would be prudent to have the Webmaster added to the Slack and the body's Google Drive, if that was not previously the case. Lastly, I hope the position of Webmaster can be optimized so that the Secretary does not have to compile and collate a year's worth of documents; my hope is that given a fresh start, the position of Webmaster can be redefined to aid in the interaction between Student Government and the Student Association.

Section 4: Advice for Future Secretaries

Communication

This is the biggest challenge for almost any organization, and it certainly applies to the position of secretary. I recommend that future secretaries establish a clear personal policy in regard to

what he or she will count as an absence (and what will be excused or unexcused), and to do so at the beginning of the semester (as always, with discretion). I would also suggest that the secretary provide regular updates to members of the body on their absence totals. Additionally, I implore the Secretary to establish a strong line of communication with the Webmaster early on, so that website updates may occur in a timely manner.

Organization

Though it may seem obvious, I would recommend that documents are organized in a way that is clear and easily navigable. It will be undoubtedly easier for the next Secretary to maintain such a structure of organization since they are starting from scratch, whereas I had to sort through a trove of documents before doing so. I would also recommend that the next Secretary meet with the President and Vice President to determine every type of document that needs to be saved, and to go over every miscellaneous duty that the position entails. For example, I was not made aware that it was my job to submit the body's roster to the CSI until late in the semester. Do your best to cover your bases. Lastly, I hope future Secretaries can build off of the structures I have tried to create and add their own ideas to further improve the efficiency of Student Government.