



Student Government Resolution 119.007

A Resolution Advocating for Improved Efficiency of Emergency Alerts at Truman State University

Sponsored by Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association; Katie Alexander, Vice President of the Student Association; Tori Woods, Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee Chair; Caroline Costello, Doug Adolphson, and Kathryn Pennell, Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee Members

WHEREAS,

- The Student Government is the official governing body of the Student Association and exists to represent the present and long-term best interests of the Student Association in the formulation of University policy and in the fulfillment of the University's mission; and
- There has been an increase in criminal alerts received by Truman State University students over the last three weeks of the Fall 2019 semester; and
- Members of the student body were particularly disturbed by a felony traffic stop arrest on the night of October 27th; and
- The Kirksville Police Department initiated a traffic stop on the 300 block of W. Patterson St. near the Truman campus; and
- The facts of the incident are as follows:
 - The Kirksville Police Department discovered the individual to be in possession of a gun as they removed him from the car; and
 - The individual threatened self-harm and asked the officers on scene to shoot him, indicating that he wanted to die by "suicide by cop;" and
 - The Kirksville Police Department, Department of Public Safety, and Highway Patrol officers immediately established a safety perimeter around the traffic stop; and
- The standoff between officers and the armed individual lasted approximately twenty minutes before the individual was taken into custody¹; and
- Students were aware of the event while the standoff was occurring, due to its close proximity to campus and many students' off-campus housing; and

¹ <https://ktvo.com/news/local/armed-kirksville-shooting-suspect-arrested-after-brief-standoff>

- Rumors that an armed person was on campus quickly circulated among students via social media and text messaging, especially among those living in Residence Halls; and
- Due to these rumors, many students perceived a threat to their safety; and
- The Department of Public Safety did not issue a TruAlert for an ongoing threat to the student body over the course of the standoff; and
- The Department of Public Safety did not issue an email message to students to assure them of their safety in a timely manner after the conclusion of the arrest; and
- The Department of Public Safety posted on their social media pages the night of October 27th after the officers took the armed individual into custody, assuring students there was no threat to campus; and
- The Director of Public Safety, Sara Seifert, issued a mass email to the student body on Thursday, October 31st to explain the facts of the incident; and
- A more timely and broad method of communication may have avoided the spread of rumors at the time of the incident;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT,

- Recognizes the Kirksville Police Department and the Department of Public Safety for their continued selflessness in protecting the Truman community; and
- Recognizes the efforts of the officers to handle the incident on October 27th in a timely and skillful manner to prevent the threat of violence to Truman students; and
- Extends our gratitude to Director Sara Seifert for attending the General Body meeting of the Student Government on Sunday, November 3rd to respond to student questions and concerns; and
- Acknowledges the difficulty of the decision to alert students to criminal activity to avoid creating an environment of fear or chaos on campus, especially in cases that are quickly resolved; and
- Acknowledges that many students felt unsafe during the incident on October 27th due to quickly-spread rumors, and that an email or text alert sent in a timely manner would have helped to dispel such rumors and clarify the actual events that transpired; and
- Shall work with the Department of Public Safety to find ways to efficiently communicate alerts of criminal activity to students, especially to address in a timely manner rumors that spread a fear of violence on Truman's campus; and
- Affirms our continued trust in the Truman Department of Public Safety and Kirksville Police Department and the sacrifices made by every officer in the service of our Truman community.

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT,

Additional copies of this resolution are disseminated to Dr. Sue Thomas, President; Janna Stoskopf, Vice President of Student Affairs; Sara Seifert, Director of Truman's Department of Public Safety; University Archives and the Truman Media Network.

Passed 11-2-1, November 17, 2019.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deanna Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association.