



Student Government Resolution 119.012
A Resolution Advocating for the Removal of the “High Impact Experience” Requirement
from the *Dialogues* Curriculum
Sponsored by Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association; and Katie Alexander,
Vice President of the Student Association

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
- Undergraduate Council has considered the idea of a “High Impact Experience” requirement over several years, notably presented by the “Next Steps Team #9” in November 2016”¹; and
- Undergraduate Council included a “High Impact Experience” requirement in the *Dialogues* curriculum passed in February 2018²; and
- Undergraduate Council incorporated the High Impact Experience into the *Dialogues* as an additional “Interconnecting Perspectives” graduation requirement, describing the HIE as an “experience beyond the Capstone Experience” that is required in academic majors³; and
- Undergraduate Council charged a High Impact Experience committee to “devise a plan/implementation schedule” and “[determine] a way to support, track, and assess” the High Impact Experiences that students undertake⁴; and
- On December 5, 2019, the High Impact Experience Committee brought a formal bill to Undergraduate Council establishing the details of the requirement⁵; and
- Under this bill, students would spend a minimum of thirty hours completing their High Impact Experience and would also complete a reflection on their activity. High Impact Experiences include, but are not limited to:
 - “Research, scholarly, and/or creative activity; and
 - Internships; and
 - Service learning and/or field experience; and
 - Learning communities; and

¹ <http://wp-internal.truman.edu/ugc/files/2015/06/HIE-Next-Steps-Recommendation-.pdf>

² <http://wp-internal.truman.edu/provost/files/2019/02/SB5516B-Revised-1-SP-The-Dialogues-Curriculum.pdf>

³ https://docs.google.com/document/d/13UIHxHP_wxj9kTflas9qM0NT4tieL3MoM2L--Mlr1aw/edit

⁴ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CEzfCcvq4KzwOHaIMDBFhvKbNADfhHWFMT5FJpuYs/edit#>

⁵ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nsobb4qwHyM7xEJV9crBNF0rGdIB7HW7pGFvrQGL6oc/edit>

- Collaborative assignments and projects; and
- Study abroad; and
- Courses approved as meeting the HIE requirement;” and
- Students may submit for approval any experiences that do not fall under the above categories to a “High Impact Experience Approval & Evaluation Committee;” and
- On January 16, 2020, the Undergraduate Council adopted an amendment to the bill to include capstone courses as potential High Impact Experiences⁶; and
- The Student Government is concerned about the additional workload the High Impact Experience requirement would place upon students whose majors do not include a High Impact Experience course for them to take as a requirement; and
- The amendment allowing majors to submit their capstone as a High Impact Experience allows for an unequal burden of graduation requirements between students, as some students will have their High Impact Experience requirement met through their major, while others will not; and
- Completing a High Impact Experience outside of a student’s normal course of study could be burdensome for students who have a rigorous course load or must work during the school year; and
- Some such High Impact Experiences may be exclusive of individuals who are not able-bodied, limiting some students’ choices in fulfilling this requirement; and
- Several of the pre-approved options for High Impact Experiences, such as internships and study abroad, can be infeasible for students with limited financial resources; and
- Even more commonplace options for completing the High Impact Experience, such as research or service projects, can be infeasible for students with limited resources, as the thirty-hour minimum time commitment forces students to forgo hours they would otherwise spend on their schoolwork or their job; and
- While intending to provide a positive contribution to students’ academic pursuits, implementing a High Impact Experience requirement may prevent students from making their own best decisions for their academics given their time and financial restrictions; and
- The newly-approved Truman Symposium, required of all incoming Truman students, integrates elements of the proposed High Impact Experience requirement, including participation in collaborative learning and a hands-on action component over the course of a semester;⁷ and
- With the passing of the new Dialogues curriculum, the burden on students to complete specific onerous tasks to graduate has grown significantly; and
- The Student Government fears that the growing list of “checkboxes” for students to complete, such as the High Impact Experience requirement, will detract from students’ understanding of the meaning of a liberal arts education; and
- As such, a student completing their High Impact Experience requirement does not necessarily mean that the student had a high impact experience; and

⁶ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OAmErN_Jo1oPJAPv7xWhNUdcfnLTw-Bo5lCCquDvZVg/edit

⁷ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k1B5F7mnGra1BZS5P23wVyc4oTgl_FbT/view

- The Student Government contends that a more pragmatic way to help students have high impact experiences would be to break down the barriers that prevent students from completing high impact experiences; and
- These methods could be similar to those originally suggested in “Next Steps Team #9” report, such as:
 - Enabling student research through providing “funding that can be used for research supplies, transportation costs, and other materials needed for courses with a significant service learning or research component;” and
 - Creating and funding courses that facilitate transformative learning experiences such as, “1-2 week trips during the spring interim or summer to site visits for service learning, research, or language immersion as well as redesign of existing courses;” and
 - “Supporting the development of on-campus internships” for students who may otherwise lack access to internship opportunities; and
- Such supportive measures could help increase the number of Truman students who complete internships, research, and other such scholarly activity, creating a more impressive statistic to showcase the Truman experience and improving the academic experience of students;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT,

- Respectfully advocates against the High Impact Experience bill that Undergraduate Council will consider on February 13, 2020; and
- Further advocates for Undergraduate Council to consider a bill being brought forward by the Student Government at the February 13th meeting, reflecting the sentiments of this resolution; and
- Suggests collaboration between Student Government and faculty governance to explore various ways to remove barriers to students participating in high impact experiences; and
- Extends our appreciation to university governance and administration for their consideration of the student opinion throughout curricular discussion.

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT,

Additional copies of this resolution are disseminated to Dr. Sue Thomas, President; Dr. Janet Gooch, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Kathryn Brammall, Chair of the Undergraduate Council; Members of the Undergraduate Council; Dr. Scott Alberts, Chair of the Faculty Senate; Members of the Faculty Senate; University Archives and the Truman Media Network.

Passed by Unanimous Consent, February 02, 2020.

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.