



### **Student Government Resolution 119.023**

## **A Resolution Encouraging the Defunding of the Collegiate Readership Program and Charging the 2020-2021 OAF Committee to Consider an Online-Based Newspaper Resource**

**Sponsored by the Organizational Activities Fee Review Committee: Emily Donohue, Chairperson; Gavin Arnold, Student-at-Large; Adam Barker, Student Government Representative; Lily Brink, SAB Representative; Cooper Giles, FAC Representative; Keegan Walsh, Student-at-Large**

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 the University policy and in the fulfillment of the University mission; and
- The Organizational Activities Fee (OAF) Review committee was gathered and appointed by the Student Government for the 2019-2020 academic year to conduct a review of the three major fee based organizations and the Collegiate Readership Program (CRP); and
- The Collegiate Readership Program provides print newspapers (*The New York Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and *USA Today*) to various locations across campus, paid for by a portion of the Student Activities Fee; and
- The Collegiate Readership Program has been operating off of a surplus for years; and
- In the 2016-2017 OAF cycle, the CRP fee was cut from \$3.75 to \$1.50 to reallocate funds to the Student Activities Board and the Funds Allotment Council; and
- As of April 2020, \$1.50 of the \$45 student fee is allocated to the CRP; and
- These are not sufficient funds to continue distributing newspapers across Truman's campus through the Collegiate Readership Program; and
- During the 2019-2020 academic year, this program already had to be limited due to insufficient funds, distributing less newspapers to less locations on campus each day; and
- Given the current account balance, the CRP only has enough funds to provide newspapers to Truman's campus for approximately one more month without being reallocated more funds; and
- According to the OAF student survey sent out to the student body in Spring, 2020, 66.7% of the 360 respondents said they had never utilized the free newspaper service; and

- According to the 2020 OAF student survey, when students were asked to judge the statement, “I feel that it is important to continue the Collegiate Readership Program,” the results were as follows: 11.9% responded Strongly Disagree, 16.9% responded Somewhat Disagree, 29.2% responded No Opinion, 25.8% responded Somewhat Agree, and 16.1% responded Strongly Agree; and
- In the survey, 78.3% of respondents said they would utilize an online newspaper resource more than a printed newspaper resource; and
- While the 2019-2020 OAF Committee has gathered initial information on the costs and logistics of an online newspaper resource, there are many more factors to be considered before an official recommendation can be made about implementing such a program;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES FEE REVIEW COMMITTEE,

- Supports defunding the Collegiate Readership Program and cancelling the printed newspaper subscription for Truman State University for the 2020-2021 school year; and
- Charges the 2020-2021 OAF Review Committee to look further into student interest and logistics of online-based newspaper subscriptions; and
- Shall put forth the cancellation of this fee to the Student Association during Spring 2020 elections with the rationale included in Appendix I and ballot language that reads: “I support reducing the portion of the Student Activities Fee allocated to the Collegiate Readership Program from \$1.50 to \$0.00 and seizing the printed newspaper subscriptions, with a plan to continue looking into the possibility of an online newspaper resource for the student population in the future.”

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT,

Additional copies of this resolution be disseminated to President Sue Thomas; Truman State University Board of Governors; Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Janet Gooch; Vice President of Student Affairs, Janna Stoskopf; Vice President for Administration, Finance & Planning, David Rector; Director of the Student Union and Campus Activities, Student Government Staff Advisor Laura Bates, the Truman Media Network; and the University Archives.

Passed, 14-2-0, April 19, 2020.



Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association.

## **APPENDIX I: Rationale**

### **CRP Review and Recommendation Rationale**

The Organizational Activities Fee (OAF) Review Committee was gathered and appointed by the Student Government to review and give recommendations for the three major fee-based organizations (the Student Activities Board (SAB), the Funds Allotment Council (FAC), and Student Government), as well as the Collegiate Readership Program (CRP), which funds the printed newspaper subscription brought to Truman's campus. As part of our review of the CRP, we examined past OAF reports, results concluded from the student survey, as well as information about future opportunities for an online-based subscription.

The CRP has been operating off of a surplus in the years leading up to this review. Prior to the 2013-2014 OAF Review, the fund had been receiving more money than it needed and was, thus, able to build a substantial surplus. So, based on committee recommendation and student approval, the portion of the student fee allocated to the CRP was partially cut. Then, during the next review session, the 2016-2017 OAF, the CRP was cut again and the funds were reallocated to SAB and FAC. In the time since the last review, more of the fund was reallocated to the Student Government through a resolution approved by the student population. Currently, \$1.50 of the \$45 student fee is allocated to the CRP. As a result, the program only has enough funds to pay for one month of the subscription.

From February 17, 2020 to March 14, 2020 the student population had the opportunity to provide feedback about the Student Activities Fee and the CRP, specifically, with a student survey. The survey was distributed to the entire student population, both undergraduate and graduate, and received 360 responses. When asked about the level of knowledge of the CRP at the beginning of the survey, 261 respondents responded that they had no knowledge of the CRP. To provide context, when asked the same question about SAB, only 14 respondents had no knowledge of the organization. Furthermore, when asked about how often respondents utilized the free newspaper service funded by the CRP, 66.7% of respondents responded that they never utilized the service. Finally, when asked to judge the statement, "I feel that it is important to continue the Collegiate Readership Program," the results were as follows: 11.9% responded Strongly Disagree, 16.9% responded Somewhat Disagree, 29.2% responded No Opinion, 25.8% responded Somewhat Agree, and 16.1% responded Strongly Agree.

It is important to note that the survey was not as exploratory as it could have been regarding the CRP. The OAF Review Committee had the intention of holding a student forum, giving the student population the opportunity to meet with the review committee and provide further feedback, however, due to a lack of student interest and a tightened review time period, the student forum was cancelled.

The final question in the survey about the CRP inquired about expected utilization of an online newspaper resource versus a printed newspaper resource. 78.3% of respondents said they would utilize the online newspaper resource more. This result was not surprising as the Student Government had passed a resolution promising to begin the transition towards an online-based subscription. The OAF review committee decided to inquire more about what this transition would look like and how much it would cost

the student population. The chairwoman of the committee met with the regional representative for higher education newspaper subscriptions at the New York Times to gain more information. According to current numbers of the total student population (5,605, both undergraduate and graduate), the online subscription would cost \$15,114.40/year, which would cost each student roughly \$2.67/year. This service would be available to the entire campus, students and faculty both.

Considering all the information discussed above, the committee decided on its recommendation. The committee recommends that the Collegiate Readership Program be defunded entirely and that all printed newspaper subscriptions received by Truman State University be cancelled. This is due to the fact that the fund had been continuously cut in the years leading up to the review, the lack of money within the fund, and the low student interest and usage of the resource. We also recommend that the next review committee look into an online-based subscription and gauge student interest in the various subscription packages that are available. The committee felt that, given the already tightened review schedule and the transition to online classes due to COVID-19, we did not have enough time or resources to adequately gauge student interest and opinion regarding an online-based subscription. We felt it was not right to make such a significant financial decision on behalf of the student population in such a tightened time period and without proper surveying.