

2018-2019 End of Year Report: Vice President Deanna Schmidt

Congratulations!! You are the VICE PRESIDENT of the Student Association at Truman State University! And what a great position to be. I'm going to clue you in on a little secret. Some may say that you shouldn't get too excited; you "don't have any real power" and all that jazz. Well, joke's on them, because VP is quite literally the best possible job one could have on Student Government, and I've loved it a lot. In this position, I've seen my job mainly as doing behind the scenes work to ensure that all other parts of the body are functioning effectively, together, and well. You are the glue that holds this ship together, remember that! This comes with some challenges, but also plenty of fun along the way. Brace yourself, here we go.

Assisting the President

Yup, that's what this job boils down to, so we might as well start here. As VP, you are the biggest helper on the body. I'll get to what that means for helping other people on the body later on in this monologue, but the most important is your commitment to helping your president. You are there to support this person in their projects, discussions, meetings, responsibilities, and, if you need to, their personal life. I had always been told how crucial it was that the President and VP get along, and I can attest to this now personally. President Thomas told us a story once this year about her "work spouse" back in graduate school; they did research together every day and were so close with each other by the end of their year together that they could finish each others' sentences and knew almost everything about each other. Keaton and I looked at each other as soon as she said that and it clicked--President and VP are most definitely work spouses. We weren't best friends by any means by the time we took office, but you quickly get to know whoever you're serving with, and after attending at least a meeting a day with them for a year and constantly communicating with them in the interims, you grow pretty close.

That being said, you gotta get along. By now you're stuck with whoever you decided to run with (lol, sorry Katie), but it's your professional duty to get along with that person to help create a cohesive administration for the rest of the body to follow. If the President and VP aren't getting along, the rest of the body knows. Even if you don't talk about it. They know. They just do. And if they know, it creates the most unnecessary drama possible, which then impedes both the ethos and effectiveness of the entire Senate. It's not worth it. So do what you have to do, talk issues out even if it takes hours on a weekend or late at night, give and take, compromise, and figure out how you can agree to move forward.

Most importantly here, remember to have fun and work closely with the President in all things--teamwork makes the dream work, as they say, and having each other to split up the work, bounce ideas off of, and vent to when things get tough really pays off throughout the year!

Creating an Ethos

This was one category that my predecessor (hey hey Sarah!) stressed to me a lot before and while I was in this role, and it didn't take long for me to see why. As VP, you're in a really unique position to serve as a leader for the body, but also as a liaison between various groups. Since one of your only "official" duties in this job is to be in charge of committees and committee chairs, that automatically means you need to be able to help solve problems if conflicts arise between committee members and their chairs, or even between committee members. You also need to be able to serve as a liaison between the President and any other members of the body if certain situations arise, which can lend itself to some tricky situations, but you got this! Biggest advice I can give is to remember to balance the personal and professional, and emphasize this to all your members: senators and chairs alike. As amazing as it is to have such a friendly body, it can sometimes lead to more hurt feelings if people think that a professional suggestion or critique is coming from a friend. Clarify these differences early on and throughout, and remember that it is your job to be friendly and welcoming, but also to maintain a sense of professionalism on the body. Chairs look to you for advice, and you need to be able to give them constructive criticism sometimes, and have difficult conversations.

Speaking of difficult conversations, remember that some conversations are not meant to be had with certain people. You and your president are work spouses, remember that. Confidential information should be kept between the two of you--not in the office with whoever is there, not with your favorite chair, and sometimes not even with your executive board. Keep private information private, and ask for advice when you need it. Unnecessary drama is just the worst, avoid it at all costs!

And, lastly, motivate chairs! That's like, your main job. Help them with their projects and questions, guide them to people who can help them more, and step in where you need to step in. If they see that you care, they will care more and get more stuff done.

Interim Chairships (and any other odd jobs!)

You are now a jack of all trades my friend, and I hope that sounds fun to you! Not only do you step in to any chairships that remain unfilled, but as the body's biggest helper, you also step in where needed. For me, that meant PR Director for most of the year, because we didn't have a PR Director for the majority of the year. Be open to these things, and actively seek replacements for yourself so you don't have to do everything!

Other Random Things

I love working on all things Academic, and am extremely passionate about the curriculum change happening. As such, I stayed involved on various committees dealing with the curriculum so that I could still voice my opinion and see change happen in that arena. 10/10

recommend continuing to work on your own passion projects--that's why you joined in the first place, so keep it up!