

Vision Document Ad Hoc Committee Final Report

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Overview of the Vision Document

Previous Editions

There are three other Vision Documents that are officially published on the Student Government website, each being made roughly five years apart from the last¹:

- 1999: An Education with Character
- 2005: Arete
- 2010: Beyond the Horizon

The themes of each of these Vision Documents revolved around an aspect of excellence that Truman was embodying. Also, with the progression of each edition of the Vision Document, the information became more condensed, focusing more and more on the achievements of the Student Government Association. This emphasis mostly on the achievements of Student Government was a path I wanted to continue following.

Purpose and Goals

Purpose. The committee and I outlined that the overarching purpose of this Vision Document should be to thoroughly cover the achievements of the Student Government Association over the past decade. In addition, discussing certain aspects of the overall University plans and their vision was also something to consider.

Goals. This section will serve to show the numerous long-term ideas the committee had planned prior to writing the actual document. Measuring how much we achieved or didn't achieve these goals will be an integral aspect of this report, as well as the recommendations to future Chairs.

- A condensed Vision Document narrowly-tailored to achievements of Student Government.
 - The expansive nature of previous editions enumerated a great deal of detail, but wouldn't always relate back to what Student Government has done, or could do, to benefit the student body.
 - The 2020 Vision Document was still longer than the previous edition due to the longer period of time covered.
 - In general, the rationale behind condensing this version was to better fit the outlined purpose of the committee when we first started meeting. The narrowing of focus will further be discussed in the "Category Selection" aspect of this report.
- A more palatable document to read for the entire student body.
 - This is a very specific and long document trying to delve into the achievements of a particular organization over a decade. This means that there should be a fair balance between explaining the minutiae of an organization and making it

¹ <https://senate.truman.edu/officialdocuments/>

interesting and easy to read for the student body. Student Government represents the student body and should explain what strides have been made to benefit this body and what is being recommended for the future.

- Mentioning and comparing Student Government’s Vision with the University’s Mission
 - A general overview of the University’s vision for Truman State was given in order to see how well it matched that of the future plans outlined in the Vision Document.
 - As the Vision Document was being written, the University’s Strategic Plan was also being finished. Milestones and metrics such as this provide a good opportunity for the Vision Document committee to see how well the Administration is doing in matching the desires of the student body².
- There was also a concerted effort to properly measure what events or ideals are important to the general student body.
 - Student surveys were discussed as a potential way to measure these desires, but the time, effort, and knowledge of administering these surveys wasn’t feasible for the committee. This is mostly due to the time that goes into conducting these surveys and the results would’ve been integral in writing the Vision Document, delaying the writing process even more.
 - If surveys of any kind is something that is of interest to future Vision Document Chairs, I recommend starting immediately on conducting them and understanding how to properly use the survey software.
 - The committee decided not to conduct student surveys as the Student Government Association are representatives of the student body and should be aware of the ideals and issues that matter to Truman students.

Recommendations. To truly cover the achievements that the Student Government Association made since the release of the previous Vision Document, an equal focus should be given to each of the years covered. In writing this most current version, most of the information spanned the last 5 years with very little detail given to the first 5. Earlier years would be mentioned in order to contextualize the formation of committees or events that would go into effect later on. Also, including metrics and detail about academic or Student Government related achievements is important to include; however, I suggest continuing on this trajectory of appealing to the student body. Really convey what Student Government is doing to benefit the students we represent at Truman. Too many times have students had an issue and not known about the available services that were already in place that could’ve helped them. This message directed towards the student body can be done with a more involved Vision Document reveal process and a strengthened public relations campaign to promote the Vision Document.

Theme

As mentioned previously, the themes for the past three Vision Documents dealt with a general focus on excellence in education. Our theme of “A 2020 Vision,” matched this while also being a

² <https://www.truman.edu/about/mission-vision/strategic-plan/>

product of the time that the document was written. Pairing these two aspects for the title/theme of the document is recommended for future versions.

Category Selection

Based upon our committee's purpose, the foundation for category selection was the six standing committees that compose the Student Government Association. Beyond that, many Ad Hoc Committees were formed throughout the last decade, so discussing these committees were also important to do. The final facet for category selection was the inclusion of any momentous initiatives or events that happened at Truman that could showcase beneficial opportunities to Truman students.

The categories that were included in this Vision Document were:

- Six Standing Committees
 - Academic Affairs
 - Diversity
 - Environmental Affairs
 - External Affairs
 - Mental Health and Wellness
 - Health, Wellness, and Safety was split into two specific sections. One being "Mental Health and Wellness," with mental health being a huge issue facing Truman. The other being "Campus Safety and Sexual Assault Prevention," as Sexual Assault Prevention Designee being an Ad Hoc Committee being under the purview of the Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee. Including campus safety was strongly contemplated by the 2019-2020 Vision Document Committee and was ultimately decided to be put in after the string of criminal incidents the Kirksville community faced in late 2019 to early 2020.
 - Student Affairs
- Ad Hoc Committees
 - Professional Programming
 - TEDx
 - Women's Leadership Conference
- University Events/Initiatives
 - University Vision Statement
 - New Logo Reveal
 - Enrollment and Retention
 - Lowering levels of enrollment was another concern that the University was facing and its consequences affect further potential concerns such as funding.
 - Retention was a topic also discussed in the Academic Affairs category of the Vision Document. Retention was made into its own category after it was a prime concern in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

- I recommend that Enrollment and Retention be a permanent category discussed in future Vision Documents as it provides context for the current standing of the University. I can understand how this category could not be included if the levels of retention and enrollment remain stagnant between releases of the Vision Documents.

Professional Programming

An entire category was dedicated to what we called “professional programming.” The committee saw that having preparation and professionalism as important themes to include in the Vision Document. This decision came after Student Government had put on two TEDx Conferences and three Women’s Leadership Conferences. Both of these events had themes promoting the ideals of professionalism, the benefits of a liberal arts education, and equality. These Ad Hoc Committees put a tremendous amount of work into these events for the student body to experience so it was imperative to give professional programming their own category. These events are planned to continue on a biannual basis, meaning that future versions of the Vision Document properly cover the themes included. If the themes of the event integrate well with the planned theme/goals of future Vision Documents, I suggest going more in-depth into how these themes help make Truman a unique or advantageous university.

New Logo Reveal and Marketing

Previous editions of the Vision Document had sections dedicated to the marketing and positioning of Truman as a college. So when Truman hired a marketing team to revamp their image in early 2019, I believed that following the marketing team and messaging was an important aspect to cover in the Vision Document³. This culminated into a New Logo Reveal and a new Slogan for Truman (Distinct by Design). This is one part of the 2020 Vision Document that isn’t directly related to the parameters of Student Government; however, I found this to be a momentous event for the University that it earned a page in this Vision Document.

Conclusions

The “Conclusion” section of the 2020 Vision Document was a fairly brief paragraph restating the purpose of the Vision Document. Previous editions had a much more expansive Conclusion section, including blurbs for several themes that were integral to their specific Vision Document. I believe that this latter route is stronger in having a more thorough Vision Document. The rationale is that summarizing a few, select themes and expanding on them during the conclusion is important to do for a document dedicated to years of achievements. In doing this, the reader can take away certain themes that best fit the context of that specific Vision Document.

Shifting Emphasis

³ <https://tmn.truman.edu/blog/news/campus/truman-hires-marketing-firm-to-revamp-image/>

As the years progress, different kinds of emphasis should be placed on the standing committees. For this Vision Document, the Diversity Committee and their achievements was especially important to promote. Topics such as bias training, name and pronoun policies, and the promotion of identity-based organizations were discussed under the Diversity category of the Vision Document. A potential category that should be emphasized in the future would be Environmental Affairs. With the growing number of environmental organizations on campus and concerns regarding climate change, this committee was emphasized in this Vision Document and I expect this trend to continue in the future.

Recommendations. Overall, I think that the category selection should resemble that of the current Student Government Association, coupled with a few segments regarding University events and changes. Furthermore, I recommend placing emphasis on certain themes and committees to best fit the context of the times. If there are dramatic changes occurring in the community, or if there's an important academic policy being implemented that'll strongly affect the student body, it's imperative to mention and give recommendations in the Vision Document on behalf of Student Government.

Formatting

As this is a document mostly written online, the formatting and appeal of the document is something to really prioritize. Previous editions of the Vision Document were almost all text, which is a great way of covering the plethora of achievements accumulated over the years; however, this leaves little room for visual appeal. My committee incorporated pictures of some of the events put on by Student Government and some of the student organizations mentioned in the document. This includes a poster made to advertise the Women's Leadership Conference with their theme "Purpose and Potential" and a photo of a student working for the Bulldog Biodiesel Organization. These photos not only showcase the work Student Government and students have done over the years, but also makes the document more appealing opposed to constant blocks of text.

Citations

Footnotes and citations could also be quite tedious to format correctly and consistently. Our committee used a shared Google Doc to easily work on this Vision Document, but the spacing and sizing of citations saw some technical difficulties. I suggest continuing to use Google Docs as it's easy to share and make suggestions throughout, but plan ahead of time about the proper formatting you'll want for footnotes. Also, ensure that the footnote citations are organized yet precise to the source being cited. The text of the footnotes can be changed through an action on Google Docs, performed by hovering over the inserted link. I also recommend considering a works cited page at the end of the document. This leaves room for you to be more general in the footnotes but give proper credit at the end of the document.

Title Page and Ending Page

Photos used for the Vision Document and for the title page were found using the Publications Office in the Kirk Memorial Building. People who work inside the office have thousands of photos that could aid for any topic covered in the Vision Document. After the title photo is selected, put in a work-request order form online and give them the text you want included for the title of the Vision Document. For the 2020 Vision Document, we wanted a bold, angular font to be used for the title of “A 2020 Vision” with the sub-header being “The Student Government Vision Document.” The ending page, or bookend was a purple page with information about Truman at the bottom in white text. This is similar to what was used in the 2010 Vision Document as well.

Document Reveal

The initial set date for the 2019-2020 Vision Document reveal was April 9th, 2020. However, this was changed due to the governmental and University policies regarding the COVID-19 pandemic⁴. The reveal is now planned for early in the Fall 2020 Semester in the Student Union Building Hub. The rationale behind this new date is to promote the achievements of the Student Government Association as students return from their summer and see the recommendations outlined in the Vision Document at the start of the new school-year. I recommend that future Chairs be aware that the time, date, and location for the Vision Document reveal is dependent on the outcome of the Room Lottery System that the Student Union Building employs. Remember to be flexible when it comes to revealing this document. The reveal also requires proper set-up of any materials with the help of the Vision Document Committee and members of the Student Government Association. For our reveal, we planned on using creating specific poster boards to be displayed on easels alongside the display of the Vision Document reveal. These educational poster boards help give general summaries of seven topics discussed in the 2020 Vision Document (the six standing committees plus Enrollment and Retention). We believed that these poster boards would serve as a good visual aid for those wanting to understand what was included in the Vision Document. The boards also enhance the visual appeal of the display in the hopes of drawing more individuals into coming to see the reveal.

Recommendations. I recommend continuing the use of visual aids in order to enhance the reveal of the Vision Document. This doesn't necessarily have to be educational poster boards, but any kind of display that draws people to see the Vision Document. Asking the Public Relations Director of the Student Government Association to assist in the promotion of the Vision Document reveal is another strong recommendation I have as a Chair. Make sure to communicate the kind of advertisement you want to see in promoting this project, as well as what kind of forms of social media can be used to target individuals you want to attend the reveal. I recommend keeping these advertisements professional yet intriguing enough to where people actually want to participate. Basically, how does this Vision Document and the reveal

⁴ <https://www.truman.edu/residence-life/covid-19-updates/>

benefit them? What can they gain from taking part in this experience? Students can benefit from understanding the many resources and institutions put into place by Student Government and the University. While faculty can come see recommendations made on behalf of Student Government and the strides made as a University.

Budgeting

The 2019-2020 Vision Document Committee was allocated a \$200 budget. The budget was adequate in purchasing multiple physical copies of the Vision Document and for the supplementary poster boards that were used as a visual aid during the reveal. Due to the size of the poster boards and the multiple copies of the document being printed, hardly any funds will be left over for other means. In addition, most of the money won't be spent until the end of the school year as the reveal doesn't take place until the committee is ready to print the document and release it to the student body.

Recommendations. Additional funding or reallocating money towards projects such as professional advertising to promote the Vision Document reveal could be advantageous in getting more students to come. Food provided by Sodexo could also be a smart way to spend some of the Vision Document budget in order to attract more people and heighten the experience of the reveal.

Publications and Printing Services

Both Publications and Printing Services were strongly beneficial in finalizing the Vision Document. Publications were used for photos incorporated within the Vision Document, the title page, and designing the poster boards to be used at the Vision Document reveal. Then, Printing Services can be sent the final copy of the Vision Document, with the title page and bookend, to print however many copies of the Vision Document that you wish or can afford given the budget. Constant communication with these two offices is strongly recommended. The Vision Document doesn't receive a title page and doesn't get printed without these two offices. In addition, as the committee finalizes their document the schedule can become somewhat tight. Understanding when Publications is going to be done with your specific work-orders helps with finalizing the document before the planned reveal. I also recommend beginning this process of getting work-orders into Publications as soon as possible to remove a sense of urgency that can be felt before the reveal of the physical document.

- Distribution of copies of the Vision Document were provided to the following people:
 - President Sue Thomas
 - Vice President of Student Affairs Janna Stoskopf
 - Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost Janet Gooch
 - Director of the Student Union Building and Campus Activities Laura Bates

- The Student Government Office
- The 2019-2020 Vision Document Ad Hoc Committee Members

I recommend that future copies of the Vision Document also be given to the individuals that are in these outlined positions, as well as contacting them specifically regarding the reveal of the Vision Document. If you find that any other individuals should receive a copy or be contacted about the reveal, make sure to do so before printing the physical copies.

Overall Thoughts and Final Recommendations

Overall, this is a manageable assignment to accomplish when sticking to a weekly schedule. This is a dense document incorporating a lot of different facets. This means that a lot of planning and consideration should be given to exactly what your committee wants to include in this Vision Document. In addition, this document covers multiple years worth of achievements and considerations from the perspective of the Student Government Association, explaining that research and enumeration of detail for each, specific year is important in forming a thorough Vision Document.

Moreover, this document includes writing and thoughts from multiple different committee members. A section about academics can be written from the perspective of one committee member and that information could potentially be contradicted by something another committee member writes in a different section. This furthers this point of planning and making sure that everyone is aware of what each other is writing, not just the sections that they are assigned. The delegation of roles is important, but a clear blue-pring and cohesive tone stemming from the document is very important. On this topic of delegation, I found it very beneficial to delegate certain sections to select committee members. Through this process the committee member becomes a historian on what has occurred at Truman for their specific section, thus being able to share with the other members of the committee. The Chair delegating roles isn't just something to be done during the writing porting of this committee. Your committee is a group of individuals you know and should trust, meaning that they are capable of a multitude of tasks as the committee Chair works as the chief architect of the document.

As the committee continuously writes the document, it behooves the committee to always be revising the work they've just completed. My committee had a process where two members would peer-review each other's sections multiple times and once the critiques were fixed, the whole committee would read through the rough draft of the Vision Document and give further comments. Revision and grammatical improvements are essential for a document such as this, where important individuals within the University's Administration will be reading it.

I recommend that Vision Documents continue to be written in five-year increments, as covering a whole decade was a quite expansive task to complete for a committee of five to six individuals. One last recommendation from me would be appointing more than six committee members as was done with the 2010 Vision Document. With proper delegation, this helps lighten the workload for your committee and adds extra individuals who can revise and help with the goals of the committee.