

## Speaker of the Student Senate End of Year Report

Jared Kolok, 2019-2020 Speaker

Submitted on: April 26, 2020

### Introduction

Probably the first, and most important, lesson you will learn about this position is that there is a need to strike a balance between efficiency and strict parliamentary procedure (and other forms of bureaucracy). The Speakership is, generally, a thankless job. I approached the Speakership in an extremely formal fashion, with a focus on neutrality, fairness, and facilitation. You *can* bend the body to your will and you *can* use your powers in ways I only dreamed of, but do so at your own risk. Again, I viewed the Speakership as an extension of the institution of the Student Senate, divorced from politics and power, doing only what I thought was best for the Senate at any given time. You will learn how your particular body prefers to function and what they respond to. Use this to help *them* be the most successful they can be.

### Responsibilities and Duties

- 1) **Facilitation of Meetings.** The most obvious is the facilitation of meetings, but this includes ensuring you understand pertinent procedures (e.g. Board of Governor selection procedures, appointments, voting), creation and maintenance of nametags (voting members, chairs and executive staff with the highest office taking precedence) and, of course, the listserv.
  - a) I used a google sheets document to track the Speakers List while we met in person
  - b) Ensure the voting document is shared between yourself and the Secretary, I would fill out no's or abstentions while the Secretary would fill out yes votes
  - c) Print out an agenda for yourself, Laura, and any visitors
- 2) **Agendas.** Follow (or innovate) the current agendas I have been using. I generally put agenda items on the agenda as they come into my inbox. Place a loose or strict deadline in place so you have time to put the agenda together and get it out in a timely manner. I generally tried to have it out at least 24 hours ahead of our meeting. Shoot for noon on Saturday.
- 3) **Listserv.** This generally has a rocky history with Speakers as it is fairly clunky, but you will learn how to manage it fairly quickly. Keep it updated every meeting, especially the first few weeks and months when appointments are a major part of the Senate's docket. Keaton Leppanen put [together this helpful document](#), but important listserv commands are below:
  - a) Add new members: approve step4qaz subscribe stugov [abc1234@truman.edu](mailto:abc1234@truman.edu)
  - b) Remove members: approve step4qaz unsubscribe stugov [abc1234@truman.edu](mailto:abc1234@truman.edu)
  - c) Check who is on the Listserv: Who stugov

- d) Make sure the body and title of the email are blank and addressed to [majordomo@truman.edu](mailto:majordomo@truman.edu), separate commands with returns, and finish the command with 'end' on its own line
- e) Send the listserv an email by using [stugov@truman.edu](mailto:stugov@truman.edu)
- 4) **Elections.** Start thinking about Fall elections now. As you are the Ethics Justice, you are the primary member who administers elections. Plan a meeting with your Executive Board as soon as possible to plan the Fall 2020 elections. Reach out to Laura and Dr. Edwards to ballot and general help or ethical considerations (respectively). Voter turnout is a problem, it always has been, but if there are any ways you think of to increase turnout do them. Try to make the Election handbook more easy to read, digest, and understand.
- 5) **Ethics.** You may be called upon by the FAC to oversee a funding issue between FAC and a student organization. Adam Barker and I both were. These are fairly easy, but you will need to ensure you have all pertinent information from FAC, reach out in advance for a meeting room, and assemble your committee in accordance with the Standing Rules. Make sure Laura and Dr. Edwards are on the same general page and are kept in the loop. You may also have to oversee Election or Ethics Hearing Boards. I have no experience with this, but the governing documents explain these procedures fairly well. Treat these situations seriously, formally, and with justice and you will be fine. Be sure to *always* inform the Student Government of outcomes in ethics hearings.
- 6) **Serve as a resource.** Be there to help members with resolution writing, procedural questions, and general questions. You may have to slow down and adapt to different circumstances, learning styles, and misunderstandings, do so patiently and sympathetically.

### **Formal and Informal Powers**

- a. Appoint Associate Senators to positions (Article I, Section 8, clause 1)
- b. Call Special Meetings of the Student Senate
- c. Recommend the formation of a Governing Documents Review Board
- d. Administer elections and oversee ethics and election hearings
- e. Create the weekly agenda and maintain the listserv
- f. Be the final authority on the governing documents and rules (always ask questions though)
- g. Appoint whoever you please as Speaker Pro Tempore, the Senate can question your choice so be conscious of that. I almost exclusively appointed Adam Barker due to his experience and his status as a Senior Senator
- h. There are certainly more as the Speakership is an overarching position

### **Suggested Governing Documents Review Board Areas of Interest**

- a. Look into getting the Student Activities Board (SAB) popularly elected just like FAC and Student Governments.
- b. Remove, dissolve, or revise the funding processes of the Appropriations Committee
- c. Process on Judicial Review in line with Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution
- d. Get the Standing Rules and the Constitution more fully in line with one another and fix discrepancies and grammar. Perhaps get the Standing Rules to be a more readable document, it is largely a document used by the Speaker, but it is a massive document even for that

### **Elections**

Due to COVID-19 many of my plans were derailed. A short list is included below for you to think about how you can make elections more successful:

- 1) Don't forget to chalk the week of voting!
- 2) Purchase yard signs that promote Student Government and voting (avoid specific dates)
- 3) Purchase large vinyl signs for the front of the SUB (again avoid specific dates)
- 4) Consider providing voting booths in a closed space (Alumni Room) for students to vote though there are serious ethical hurdles to consider
- 5) Revise the election handbook to make it easier to read and understand
  - a) Make the filing packet stuff independent from the campaign and election restrictions
  - b) Hold mandatory meetings in person to answer questions and address the material in the handbook

### **COVI-19 and Meetings**

We have obviously been using Zoom to do out business. The login information and details will be passed along to you shortly after you take office. Zoom is pretty easy to use, just remember to begin recording the proceedings.

### **Final Comments and Conclusions**

Be sure to include yourself in as many discussions with the President and the rest of the Executive Board as possible. Your opinions and knowledge base are important and cannot be ignored for myriad reasons. The Speaker serves many roles but, ultimately in my view, you are there to serve as a liaison between the Executive, Judicial, and Executive functions of Student Government. Facilitate discussions. Offer advice on rules and general information. Provide constitutional impetus and authority to back up your decisions and opinions. And most importantly rule with an even, nuanced, and neutral hand. I had a great deal of respect for Student Government, its leadership, and the Student Senate and its advisors. I hope you will too. And should you find that respect, I am sure you will do great things in this role.

The Speaker, more than any other role in my opinion, is open for your interpretation and there are many different styles you can approach the position with. That style will thankfully evolve overtime as you learn from your mistakes and missteps. Trust the people around you and trust that everyone in this organization wants a better university and a better Student Government.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Kolok, Speaker of the Student Senate 2019-2020

## Appendix I: Spring 2020 Election Results

	<b>Position</b>	<b>Vote</b>
<b>Katie Alexander and Josh German</b>	<b>President and Vice President (1/1)</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Braden Leuthauser</b>	<b>Funds Allocation Council (1/1)</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>Shania Mintúfar</b>	<b>Senior Senator (3/3)</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Maddie Meyer</b>	<b>Senior Senator (12/13)</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Sam Tillman</b>	<b>Senior Senator</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Jesse Wren</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Emily Smith</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Ethan Kershaw</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Adam Barker</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Joshna Karki</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Kiren Macleod</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Sutton Purinton</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Richard Parks</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>Alexandra Crawford</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>John Marx</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Ireti Rotimi</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>P.J. Wuennenberg</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Luke Rasher</b>	<b>Voting Senator</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Total Student Votes</b>	<b>360</b>	

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Defunding the Collegiate Readership Program</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Judicial Power Constitutional Amendment</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Executive Power Constitutional Amendment</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Article II Constitutional Amendment</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Committees Constitutional Amendment</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Article X Constitutional Amendment</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Preamble Constitutional Amendment</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>32</b>