

## Diversity Committee End of Year Report

Submitted by: Kennedy Cooper, Diversity Committee Chair, Shania Montúfar, Lizzie Cremer, Kavya Singh, Azeeza Eagal, Sam Tillman, Cecilia Amokao, Diversity Committee Members

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### **Projects and Suggestions:**

- 1. Land Acknowledgement Art Commission (ongoing- almost done, waiting on the art)**
  - a. After passing our Land Acknowledgement resolution last Spring, we decided to move forward in commissioning an Indigenous artist to create a work of art to supplement our acknowledgement. We made contact with Jessica Harjo (weomepedesigns.com/), an enrolled member of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe and visual artist in October. From there, we contracted her to create a graphic design for the land acknowledgement statement to be used online, in posters/paper graphics, and potentially as a permanent installment in our Student Union. She worked with Laura Bates and the Business office to complete the necessary forms, and began working on the project close to the end of the year. Jessica provided us with two final designs and an artist statement in April. The final steps in this project include printing and framing the art, ordering a plaque, and finding a location to put it up on campus.
- 2. Emergency Funds/Micro Funds (ongoing)**
  - a. We looked into potentially establishing some sort of foundation scholarship or fund to have an emergency fund that is available to all students. This could be used for things like if a student needs some money to make rent, or pay for an emergency expense. Hopefully, if established these emergency funds could help with retention.
  - b. This project is still ongoing, we didn't really get very far with it, because it was difficult to figure out who to talk to.
- 3. DPS Survey (ongoing)**
  - a. We wrote some questions for a survey about DPS
  - b. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ke0TsCEmYogJw4x-ZcszoerZtJG6oUnyBeucvxgkO\\_0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ke0TsCEmYogJw4x-ZcszoerZtJG6oUnyBeucvxgkO_0/edit?usp=sharing)
  - c. We never really sent them out or anything, we might do that in the future
- 4. Gender Neutral Housing (ongoing)**
  - a. Gender-Neutral housing is a project that Student Government has supported through several resolutions dating back to 2013. Currently, students can request gender-neutral housing and supposedly it is available to specific students (transgender or gender nonconforming) based upon an interview process. Given recent changes in the Board of

Governors membership, the committee decided to pursue this project again in Spring 2020 and make Gender-Neutral housing more widely available to the student body.

In 2020, we worked with Jamie Van Boxel, director of ResLife, and Janna Stoskopf, Vice President of Student affairs, to write a proposal. We also received formal support from the Residence Hall Association. After meeting with Sue Thomas, it came to our attention that we needed to have a written GNH policy in order to present to the BOG. We plan to bring this proposal and policy to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Governors at their meeting on the first weekend of June. If all goes well, we will bring the policy to the full board in August.

**5. LGBTQ Resource Center (ongoing)**

- a. This is a project that is mostly headed up by Brad Turnbull, Interim Director of the CDI. We worked with him by meeting about it a few times, and also we passed a resolution in support of his proposal.
- b. In the future- we may need to work with the CDI more when it gets to the approval process for the proposal, and when the center gets started.

**6. Interfaith Center Improvement (ongoing)**

- a. We bought some things for the Interfaith Center Prayer Room. These things included a new fountain, a plastic mat to put under the fountain, a compass, a mini zen garden, and colored pencils. Many of these things were purchased to help students create a meditative/mindful environment while using the prayer room.
- b. One thing that was really cool about this project was that we received a lot of help. Brad Turnbull, Interim Director of the CDI was very helpful. While researching this project, and what other schools were doing, we came across the University of Vermont's Interfaith Center. Rev. Laura Engelken, the director of the Interfaith Center at UVM was very helpful in giving us recommendations on how to improve the prayer room.
- c. In the future, it might be cool to do programming with the interfaith center- that is why it is marked as ongoing

**7. Sodexo (complete)**

- a. Warren Barge, Student Affairs Chair, and Kennedy Cooper met with John Stuart from Sodexo to discuss student concerns with lack of Kosher and Halal Food, and also lack of consistency in labeling. Sodexo is very limited in their ability to provide Kosher and Halal foods, because of the increased cost. They said that they may be able to work with specific students, but cannot afford to make Kosher and Halal food available to everyone. They did agree to put more work into making sure that they will label food ingredients better and more clearly.

**8. Committee Name Change (complete)**

- a. We worked on finding a new name for our committee. Some options that were considered were Equity Committee, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Committee, and Diversity and Inclusion Committee. We ended up deciding on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, because it would be in line with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

## **Events:**

### **1. Moonlight Showing-**

- a. After the cancellation of the 2020 Diversity Week as a result of the pandemic, we still had the rights to a showing of *Moonlight*. We decided to collaborate with the Queers of Color Collective and the Association of Black Collegians in order to host a movie and discussion of the film on October 2nd. The film was shown in a tiered room in Baldwin Hall, and we met our capacity quickly. A bigger space may be ideal for future movie showings (Georgian Rooms or Little Theatre).
- b. The following is a description of the film:
  - i. *Moonlight* is a coming-of-age story of a young man's struggle to find himself, told across three defining chapters in his life as he experiences the ecstasy, pain, and beauty of falling in love, while grappling with his own sexuality.

### **2. Awake Showing-**

- a. Friday, November 6th, 6:00 pm in the Georgian Rooms
- b. "The film tells the dramatic story of the historic #NODAPL native-led peaceful resistance at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, which captured the world's attention as one of the biggest stories of 2016. Tens of thousands of activists traveled to North Dakota from all over the world to take a stand alongside the "water protectors" -- activists opposing construction of the 3.7 billion dollar Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The pipeline is proposed to transport fracked oil from North Dakota's Bakken oil fields directly underneath the Missouri River on sovereign Lakota land, the only water source for the Standing Rock reservation and the drinking water source for 17 million Americans downstream."<sup>1</sup>
- c. We co-hosted this event with The Environmental Affairs Committee. We had the film showing in person and on Zoom. The event was fairly well attended, and we had a few Zoom participants.

### **3. Black Feminist Coffee Hour-**

- a. The Coffee Hour was a forum space for Black Feminists and their allies to congregate and discuss contemporary and experiential concerns on Truman State's campus
- b. The event was hosted on Zoom on February 23 at 6pm
- c. We struggled a bit to promote this event, so it wasn't that well attended. But the folks that were there had a very constructive discussion. I think that in the future,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6691862/plotsummary>

we would need to focus the promotion of this a bit better and we could have better turn out.

**4. Land of Opportunity Showing-**

- a. February 26, 2020, Baldwin Little Theater, 6pm
- b. Land of Opportunity is the story of integration in Kansas City's Santa Fe Place neighborhood as one example in the fight for housing rights across America following the Great Depression. A bit of a tip would be to actually know how the technology in the room works before the event so you don't make a fool of yourself in front of everyone...

**5. Racial Equity Recap Discussion-**

- a. This event was co-hosted with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion as a recap discussion about racial equity on our campus. President Thomas, Bertha Thomas, DPS, Greek Life, and the Center for Academic Excellence provided updates about their work surrounding racial equity in the past few semesters. A panel of students also discussed our progress and provided suggestions. The event lasted slightly over one hour and had better attendance than expected (around 80 people). We sent out a survey after the event and every participant surveyed either "agreed" or "Strongly agreed" that they "learned something new about Truman's racial equity efforts in watching this event." Participants also suggested that future events like this be longer than an hour.

**Resolutions:**

1. National TRIO day Resolution
  - a. TRIO Programs are federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for highly qualified, eligible students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Truman State has 2 TRIO programs right now, the Ronald E. McNair program and Upward Bound
  - b. We passed a resolution to proclaim February 27, 2021 as TRIO day. February 27th is National TRIO day.
2. Gender and Sexuality Diversity Center Resolution
  - a. This is the resolution that was written in support of Brad Turnbull's proposal for a Gender and Sexual Diversity Center.
  - b. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JcuaePl8FqTWhfs6e-Quzw9Tj3g9t0Zt\\_8R28D0g0mE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JcuaePl8FqTWhfs6e-Quzw9Tj3g9t0Zt_8R28D0g0mE/edit?usp=sharing)
3. Name Change Resolution?
  - a. This resolution was written by the Governing Documents Review Board, and it is co sponsored by some members of this committee. It helped change the title of our committee in the standing rules and constitution

