

Student Affairs Committee End of Year Report 2021

Submitted by: Warren Barge, 2020-2021 Committee Chair

Submitted April 25th, 2021

Committee Members:

Sam Myers (Purple Friday Committee Chair; Voting Senator)

Owen Smith (Ethics Justice; Assistant IT Director; Voting Senator)

Rachel Holt (Voting Senator)

Kennedy Cooper (Voting Senator)

Kana Kassa (Associate Senator)

Ruth Teferi (Associate Senator)

Caroline Wright (Associate Senator)

Projects

This committee was involved in the continuous fulfillment of the non-academic aspects of the University community. This committee also encourages updates/improvisations deemed necessary from the perspective of the Student Association.

International Education Week

Status: Completed

Description: The Center for International Students (CIS) requested StuGov's assistance in their International Education Week. Committee Chair Warren Barge and Vice President Josh German met with CIS Student Representative Stephanie McNab to discuss how StuGov could help. The CIS requested two things: that StuGov work with the U&I to play international music in the SUB during International Education Week and the also work with the U&I to find a safe place to showcase international instruments in the SUB. We could not find a place that would show off the instruments without putting them in danger. However, we were able to play music at the SUB, using the soundtrack that the CIS provided us.

Campus Rec Dress Code

Status: Ongoing

Description: Late in the year, we received reports that the dress code at the Rec Center was being selectively enforced against women in terms of what kinds of tops were allowed in the weight room and other areas. The dress code was previously undefined and stated people had to wear a 'shirt,' an ill-defined term which led to women in tank tops being asked to change their outfits. President Katie Alexander talked with the Rec and it was revealed that the Rec *had no dress code*, which was very strange. We were tasked with coming up with an acceptable definition for a top that would include all nipple-covering tops (which is really what we were going for). We agreed on the following wording for dress code rules:

- Everyone must wear a top in the weight room. We define a top as an article of clothing covering part of the torso.
- Any perceived violation of the dress code should be seconded by another Rec employee before the patron is asked to change.

However, we were unable to follow up with the Rec and are unsure of the current state of this policy. This should be addressed by future Student Affairs Committees, as it concerns the ability of students to feel comfortable in their own skin. It may also be prudent to work with the Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee, as many campuses enforce dress codes in athletic areas for student safety.

Sodexo Food Policy

Status: Ongoing

Description: StuGov heard concerns from students that Sodexo's food information policies were not allowing them to practice their religious/ethical diets. For instance, the particular meats in some dishes weren't listed, making it difficult for students with Halal diets to know which foods were acceptable to eat per their beliefs. Student Affairs worked with the Diversity Committee to research this problem. Committee Chair Warren Barge and Diversity Committee Chair Kennedy Cooper met with Sodexo to discuss possible changes they could make. Sodexo said they could not make any changes to their ingredients for cost reasons. Making specifically Halal foods would double their costs. They also believed that it is hard for them to judge what is Halal or Kosher. They also discussed the difficulty of changing their menus, since they use a third party, but said they would work harder to improve the labeling of their products at the dining halls.

If I Knew Then Project

Status: Not Started

Description: Academic Affairs brought this project to attention to Student Affairs. This would ultimately ask alumni to give their advice to Truman Students. More concretely, Truman would ask these alumni questions and Student Government would post the answers on a website that was somehow connected to the Student Government website. We began discussing how to implement this but ultimately did not get far enough.

Fee Based Organizations Committee

Status: Ongoing

Description: Student Affairs had a conversation on the design and organization of a new committee that would have meetings throughout the year between members of Student Government, SAB and FAC. This would encourage cooperation among the organizations. SAB and FAC both seemed open or optimistic about the idea but Student Affairs disagreements prevented it from getting far off the ground.

Finals Scream

Status: Completed

Description: Jesse, our Treasurer, requested that StuGov help fund an event called the Finals Scream in coordination with the Health, Wellness, and Safety committee. This is something the U&I does at the end of the year before finals to allow students to de-stress with various fun activities. Because we had surplus funds and thought this was a cool event, we provided \$400 to the U&I.

Events

This event we feel helps achieve the goals of the committee and are feasible to re-execute in the coming years.

Student Appreciation Week

Description: Student Appreciation Week was held in the Fall 2020 semester, a change from its usual place in the Spring semester. This shift was made after members of the committee recognized the prevalence of events in spring and feared that the week may be “overrun” by other events. As a result, Student Appreciation Week was held from November 18-20th to rousing success. We tabled each day during the event in front of the SUB or in the Alumni Room, We handed out many things, like \$5 Sodexo vouchers, custom Student Appreciation Week t-shirts, and other StuGovmemorabilia, including, but not limited to: frisbees, notepads, masks, bags, stickers, hand sanitizer, cups, and stress balls. Next year, be careful to only pass out the items that have been set aside to be passed out. Student Government was provided funds for the t-shirts from Residence Life, Center for Diversity and Inclusion, U&I, and Greek Life.

Resolutions

Passed Resolutions

[A Resolution Encouraging the Suspension of Student Obligations on Election Day](#)

Discussion: Student Affairs worked with External Affairs to pass a resolution encouraging faculty to give Students election day off. This came on the heels of a Student Climate Union petition demanding that Truman give students the day off that received hundreds of signatures. While this may have encouraged some professors to give the day off, it did not persuade as many as we would have liked.

Ongoing Resolutions

[A Resolution Encouraging the Suspension of Classes Every Election Day](#)

Discussion: We expanded upon the previous resolution with a resolution encouraging the Truman administration to give students every election day off. The proposal would hopefully reach the Board of Governors which would make a longer lasting change. Of course, the resolution itself has more fine details that increase its chances of being approved by the board of governors.

[A Resolution Advocating for the Reimbursement of Student Driving Costs](#)

Discussion: Owen Smith heard concerns about nursing students having to drive over 300 miles a semester for their courses. Because this can endow a significant cost our committee looked to develop a resolution encouraging Truman to reimburse these students for these costs. We found a roadblock when discussing where these funds would come from, and how to write the resolution to help only nursing students without being discriminatory.

Future Project Suggestions

These are projects that we were unable to complete. These would be good to look into at the beginning of the first semester.

Communicating with RHA

Description: Student Affairs is tasked with providing a representative to Residence Hall Association (RHA) meetings. Their meetings are once every two weeks. They occasionally provide programming for the residence halls on campus and create policies for the halls as a whole. They are an important source of communication and outreach, as they send monthly emails to all on-campus students. Our relationship has been unsteady at best, as many of our members are busy and can't make it to their meetings. However, coordinating with them will allow us to reach a greater proportion of the student population and target our events to the most easily accessible group of students—on-campus students. Reach out to the RHA President and officer board to get this relationship started.

Establishing connections with clubs across campus

Description: Student Government is the voice of the entire student body to the administration. Unfortunately, StuGov isn't representative of the entire body. To that effect, we discussed several times over the semester the idea of connecting with the clubs across campus. We dismissed the idea of going to each club in person, as there are over 230 clubs and only eight of us. But there can always be more we do to get in touch with people so we can address their concerns. One thing that would be feasible would be emailing the student leaders of each club and making yourself available to them. These emails can be found on the U&I's clubs and organization page. Reaching out to the student body in any way possible is a goal for this committee!

Work with the Center for International Students on Projects

Description: International Students often feel uncomfortable giving their voice at Truman State University. The Center for International Students is a cool organization that represents these students. Continue to work with them on events such as International Education Week.

T-Shirt Cannon/Launcher

Description: Our committee wanted to find a way to bring some more excitement to Student Appreciation Week. Tabling is great and all, but it's somewhat dull. We seriously considered buying a t-shirt cannon or launcher, but ultimately started on that project too late for Student Appreciation Week. It is worth noting that gas-powered cannons will have recurring costs because you need to refill the gas canisters...but they are also super cool. There are other slingshot-type launchers that are cheaper and would still be cool, too though. We would ask that any purchased cannon or launcher be ceremonially dubbed the 'Sam Shooter' after Sam Myers, who proposed the idea.

Notes and Suggestions for Future Committee Chairs

- Communicate with members of your committee
 - Your committee members have some incredible strengths that you should take advantage of. If you do not clearly communicate what you want them to do, then it is difficult to get the full value of their service.
- Bond with members of your committee outside of meetings
 - It is difficult to understand where they want to take the committee without getting to know them personally. Talking over lunches and dinners can do wonders for building a personal relationship.
- Communicate with outside clubs and organizations for ideas
 - Student Affairs is such a broad topic that it can often seem as if most tasks should instead be handled by other committees. I believe that while External Affairs is currently the committee in charge of communicating with clubs and organizations, it should instead focus on non-Truman organizations and institutions. Communicating with these clubs would be a task for Student Affairs. These clubs and organizations could be the lifeline between the student body and Student Affairs but we currently do not have relationships built up.
- If you have a plan of action, bring it up with your committee after you have it halfway thought out.
 - Sometimes your committee can be antagonistic to ideas that you bring up if you are just mentioning a concept. Having both the concept and the practical method you are thinking about doing to apply that concept can significantly increase the chances that your committee will accept it.
- Remember that committee meetings can be to your length in time
 - If you want longer meetings where you are off-topic often and just bond, you can do that. If you want short and concise meetings, you can do that too. It is really up to you to decide what you want your meetings to look like.

- Enjoy being a committee chair
 - Being a committee chair can sometimes be stressful. Remember that you are doing a lot of great things that are improving the student body. Also remember that this is allowing you to meet some tremendous people that you would not meet elsewhere. If you are really finding the position overwhelming, communicate with one of the senior chairs at Truman.

Respectfully Submitted,
Warren Barge
2020-2021 Student Affairs Committee Chair