



### **Student Government Resolution 121.004**

#### **A Resolution Amending the Absence Policy in the Governing Documents of the Student Government**

**Sponsored by: Owen Smith, Governing Documents Review Board Chair; Warren Barge, Student Affairs Committee Chair; Kennedy Cooper, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair; Mike Owsley, External Affairs Committee Chair; Maddie Meyer, Parking Appeals Committee Chair; Owen Hamill, Incoming Senator**

WHEREAS,

- The Student Government is the official governing body of the Student Association and exists to represent the present and long term best interests of the Student Association in the formulation of the University policy and in the fulfillment of the University's mission; and
- The Truman State University Student Government is bound by the rules detailed in its governing documents; and
- On October 3rd, 2021, President Shania Montúfar issued an executive order authorizing the creation of a Governing Documents Review Board<sup>1</sup>; and
- Said executive order authorizes the Governing Documents Review Board to identify and make changes to necessary sections, clauses, and articles of the Student Government's governing documents to "Revise and clarify the excused absence policy"; and
- The current excused absence policy is narrowly defined and difficult for members to interpret and time-consuming for the Secretary; and
- Members are not able to plan for emergency absences and may not be able to petition the Secretary for an exception to the excuse policy due to the nature of the emergency; and
- Standardizing the process by which the Secretary records absences would improve communication about absences and allow the Secretary to more effectively serve the organization; and
- The number of excused absences members are currently allowed does not change based on their position or the amount of time they are required commit to the organization; and
- The removal process when members hit the maximum number of absences is complicated and

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<sup>1</sup><https://senate.truman.edu/files/2021/10/An-Executive-Order-Establishing-a-Governing-Documents-Review-Board-for-the-Fall-2021-Semester.pdf>

- could be better written so as to be understood by future Speakers and members of the body; and
- Amendments to the relevant sections of the Standing Rules and Constitution are available in the Appendices below:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT,

- Approves the proposed changes to the Standing Rules and the Constitution of the Truman State University Student Government and gives its consent to place the constitutional changes on the Spring 2022 general election ballot and up to a vote by the Student Association; and
- Will use the current absence policy for the remainder of the Fall 2021 academic semester and enforce the new absence policy beginning with the Spring 2022 semester; and
- Approves ballot language for the proposed constitutional amendments to read: “A vote “yes” on this measure shall be considered an approval of the changes proposed to the Constitution of the Truman State University Student Government; and a vote “no” shall be considered a disapproval of the changes proposed to the Constitution of the Truman State University Student Government. Attached below are copies of both the current and proposed amended version of the Constitution of the Truman State University Student Government”; and
- Shall implement, upon approval by the Student Senate and contingent upon the approval by the Student Association on the constitutional amendments, the proposed amendments to the Standing Rules and Constitution of the Truman State University Student Government; and
- Shall make, upon approval and immediate effect of the amendments to the governing documents, any corrections to section title or numbering in the table of contents of the governing documents;

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF TRUMAN STATE DIRECTS THAT,

Additional copies of this resolution be disseminated to: President Sue Thomas; Truman State Board of Governors; Janna Stoskopf, Dean of Student Life; Office of Special Collections and the Truman Media Network.

Passed by unanimous consent, October 31st, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shania Montúfar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Shania Montúfar, President of the Student Association

## Appendix A: Amendments to Standing Rules Article V

### Article V: Absences

#### Section 1: Absence Policy

##### Clause 1

Each voting member of the Senate and member of the Executive Board will be allowed a maximum of one unexcused absence per semester and a maximum of five total absences, whether excused or not, per semester of office. Individual members may petition the Secretary to make exceptions to the policy, subject to a majority approval from the Executive Board, in the event of unforeseen or extraneous circumstances.

##### Clause 2

Associate members will be allowed a maximum of one unexcused absence per semester and a maximum of three total absences, whether excused or not, per semester of office. Individual members may petition the Secretary to make exceptions to the policy, subject to a majority approval from the Executive Board, in the event of unforeseen or extraneous circumstances.

##### Clause 3

Each member filling any position not listed above shall be designated an individual absence policy by the President to coincide with their attendance requirements, which shall also be created by the President.

#### Section 1: Definition of Excused and Unexcused Absences

##### Clause 1

There are three types of excused absences:

- a. Necessary Obligation - an absence that occurs when it is necessary for the member to attend a significant one-time, non-recurring function; for example: an event required due to being an officer of another U&I RSO, a family event, or medical appointment.
- b. Class Conflict - an absence that occurs when a meeting is scheduled during a member's class time.
- c. Emergency - an absence that occurs when a member cannot attend a meeting because of previously unforeseeable events such as family emergencies, medical appointments and emergencies, or prolonged medical situations, that endanger the member's well-being

##### Clause 2

All absences not ultimately designated as excused are unexcused.

#### Section 2: Excused Absence Policy

##### Clause 1

Members are generally allowed an unlimited number of excused absences.

##### Clause 2

If the number of valid, excused absences a member incurs is so great that it interferes with their ability to serve on the body, the Secretary and Vice President shall meet with the member to discuss if the member has the ability to serve in their role and what could be done to improve their attendance, including resignation, if necessary.

##### Clause 3

To qualify for an excused absence under Clause 1.a., members must submit a standardized form (as designated by the Secretary) to the Secretary no less than 48 hours prior to the absence. The Secretary shall create this form and make it available and accessible to all members in a timely manner after the Secretary is appointed to their position.

#### Clause 4

Excuse forms submitted to the Secretary less than 48 hours prior to the absence are unexcused unless the Secretary deems the excuse a Class Conflict or Emergency as outlined in Section 1, Clauses 1.b. and 1.c. respectively.

#### Clause 5

Excuses for committee meeting absences shall be submitted to the committee chair. Excuses for missing all other events (including General Body and Executive Committee meetings, office hours, retreat, and any other required events) shall be submitted to the Secretary.

#### Clause 6

Members may petition the Secretary to make exceptions to the excuse policy in the event of unforeseen or extraneous circumstances, including but not limited to work conflicts and personal mental health concerns. The Secretary has the authority, in consultation with the Vice President, to excuse absences outside of those outlined above.

#### Clause 7

The Secretary shall submit their excuses to the President. The Executive Board shall enforce the excuse policy in regards to the Secretary.

### Section 3: Unexcused Absence Policy

#### Clause 1

Failure to attend a required event, meeting, or other required activity as listed in Section 4 below without a valid excuse shall count as one (1) unexcused absence unless otherwise stated.

#### Clause 2

The number of unexcused absences a member is allowed per semester is equal to the number of weekly events listed in Section 4 that the member is required to attend.

#### Clause 3

If, during the semester, a member becomes required to attend an additional weekly meeting, they are granted an additional unexcused absence.

#### Clause 4: Example

For example: a Voting Senator, who must attend a weekly General Body meeting, a weekly committee meeting, and a weekly office hour, would initially be granted three (3) unexcused absences per semester (3 required weekly events = 3 unexcused absences). If they were later to join a secondary committee, they would be granted one (1) additional unexcused absence for a total of four (4) during that semester.

### Section 24: Requirements

#### Clause 1

Voting members, members of the Executive Board, primary committee chairs, and any other members so instructed by the President shall attend all full weekly general body meetings. Failure to attend a full

body meeting shall count as one absence.

Clause 2

Members of the Executive Board, primary committee chairs, and any other Executive Committee members so instructed by the President shall be required to attend all Executive Committee meetings. Failure to attend an Executive Committee meeting shall count as one absence.

Clause 3

Members who are part of any primary committee, subcommittee, or secondary committee, or ad hoc committee shall attend all of the meetings of their committee. Failure to attend a committee meeting shall count as one absence.

Clause 4

The Executive Order creating an ad hoc committee shall designate whether attendance at the committee's meetings is mandatory; if attendance of the ad hoc committee is mandatory, the member will be allotted one extra absence toward their semester total, and absence at the committee's meetings shall be counted

Clause 5

Committee chairs shall keep the attendance for their committee. Chairs shall record absences as excused or unexcused in accordance with Article 5, Section 1. They shall provide an informal method for committee members to submit excuses, and use their discretion to excuse absences beyond those outlined in that Section. Chairs shall report their committee attendance to the Secretary.

Clause 46

Voting members, the Speaker, members of the Executive Board, primary committee chairs, and any other Executive Staff members or associate members so instructed by the President shall work one regularly scheduled office hour per week in the Student Senate office. Failure to work an office hour shall count as one absence.

Clause 57

Voting members, members of the Executive Board, primary committee chairs, and any other Executive Staff members or associate members so instructed by the President shall attend the Fall and Spring retreats. Failure to attend the retreat without an excused absence shall count as two unexcused absences.

Clause 68

Voting members, members of the Executive Board, primary committee chairs, or any other Executive Staff members or associate members so instructed by the President shall attend Senate events may be designated as 'required' by the President if so designated two weeks prior to the event. Such events are subject to the absence policy described in Sections 1-3 and require a valid excuse if missed, or are otherwise counted as an unexcused absence. Failure by voting members, members of the Executive Board, primary committee chairs, or any other Executive Staff members or associate members so instructed by the President to attend a required event shall count as one absence. The President may designate no more than four required events per semester.

Clause 79

Failure to attend any required Student Senate function while conducting other Student Senate business shall not count as an absence. When it is necessary, a replacement member should be found to attend the function, and the Secretary should be notified.

Clause 810

If a member has not submitted an excuse, missing more than half of the general body or executive

committee meeting shall count as an unexcused absence at the discretion of the Secretary.

### Section 3: Excuse Policy

#### Clause 1

The Secretary shall enforce the excuse policy regarding excused and unexcused absences. Excused absences are defined as follows: family emergencies, medical appointments and emergencies, and other extenuating circumstances as determined by the Secretary. The Executive Committee shall enforce the excuse policy in regards to the Secretary.

#### Clause 2

Excuses shall be submitted to the Secretary at least six hours before the absence is to occur not be counted. The Secretary shall submit his or her personal excuse to the President.

### Section 45: Removal Process

#### Clause 1

When a member of the Student Senate has reached one unexcused absence or their maximum number of total unexcused absences, the Secretary shall contact the member privately to notify the member in question about having reached the maximum number of unexcused or total absences.

#### Clause 2

When a member of the Student Senate has exceeded their number of allowable unexcused absences, the Secretary shall immediately contact the member privately, and then move to remove the member from the body at the next general body meeting of the Student Meeting announce to the Student Senate at the earliest meeting possible that the said member should be removed from the Student Senate.

#### Clause 3

Immediately following the Secretary's announcement, the member individual in question may choose to appeal their removal decision to remove him or her from office to the Student Senate. If the decision is appealed, the Speaker shall automatically move the meeting into closed session. Once in closed session, the Secretary will be given a maximum of three minutes to explain why the member should be removed. Directly following this statement, the member individual in question will be given a maximum of three minutes to explain why they should remain a member of the Student Senate.

#### Clause 4

Upon the Secretary's announcement, the individual in question is no longer a member of the Student Senate. If the individual in question was a voting member, their voting right shall be revoked along with membership. After delivering his or her statement, the individual in question must leave the chamber as they are no longer a member of the Student Senate.

#### Clause 54

Following their statement, the member shall exit for the duration of the closed session the statements and the exit of the individual in question stipulated in the previous sections, and the Student Senate shall allow discussion time from the floor and shall limit each member of the Student Senate may speak to speaking once for a period of no longer than three minutes. At the conclusion of this discussion time, the Speaker will automatically call for a roll call vote to determine whether the member in question should be allowed to be reinstated as a member of the Student Senate. The appeal will be upheld and the individual in question will be allowed to remain in the Student Senate if a majority of those voting members present and voting, not counting abstentions, vote to sustain the appeal. If this majority is not achieved, the individual in question shall remain removed from the Student Senate and all of his or her offices shall be declared vacant.

#### Clause 5

Upon the Secretary's announcement (if unappealed) or the Senate's rejection of an appeal, the individual in question is no longer a member of the Student Senate. If the individual was a voting member, their voting right shall be revoked along with membership.

#### Clause 6

If the member's appeal of their removal is sustained in question is pardoned for violating the absence policy, the member shall then be allowed one unexcused absence but no unexcused absences. If the member exceeds this amount, they shall again go through the removal process.

#### Clause 7

In the event that the Secretary exceeds theirhis or her allowed number of absences, the Vice President shall fulfill the duties of the Secretary as outlined above.

#### Clause 8

In the event that the Speaker exceeds theirhis or her allowed number of absences, a randomly selected senior senator shall serve as Speaker Pro Tempore during the appeal, unless a Speaker Pro Tempore has already been designated.

## Appendix B: Other Relevant Standing Rules Amendments

### Article I: The Student Senate

#### Section 10: Committee Membership

##### Clause 1

Committee members shall be appointed to a committee by the President in consultation with the Committee Chair and confirmed by the Student Senate during their appointment. Regular committee membership shall be initially determined by the President and Vice President after the fall election and appointed, subject to approval by the Student Senate, in the subsequent meeting. Regular committee membership appointments after the fall elections shall be made and approved on a rolling basis.

##### Clause 2

When a student without a seat on Student Senate becomes a committee chair, the student shall simultaneously become an associate member of the Student Senate. Committee attendance for chairs and members, whether a Voting Senator or not, is mandatory. Absences shall be counted towards a member's.

#### Section 11: Committee Chairs

##### Clause 1

All primary, secondary, and ad hoc committee chairs shall work with the President and Vice President to set and prioritize goals for their committees. Committee Chairs work to ensure the functioning, planning, and work of their committees.

##### Clause 2

Each week, Committee Chairs of primary, secondary, and ad hoc (if the ad hoc committee requires attendance) Committee Chairs shall submit a record of committee meeting attendance to the Secretary. The Secretary shall record only unexcused absences by committee members.



Article II: Executive Board

Section 4: Duties of the Secretary

Clause 1

The Secretary shall maintain a contact list of the current membership of the Student Government, which shall be made available to the Student Government and general public.

Clause 2

The Secretary shall ~~make the~~ take minutes of the general and Executive Committee meetings and make them available to the Student Government, and general public, and in coordination with the Information Technology ~~Public Relations~~ Director.

Clause 3

The Secretary shall be required to attend a Fall and Spring retreat as scheduled by the Executive Committee.

Clause 4

The Secretary shall attend all regular and special meetings of the Student Senate and report at each regular meeting of the Student Senate.

Clause 5

The Secretary shall hold a minimum of one regularly scheduled office hour per week in the Student Senate office. These office hours may not run concurrently with office hours for any other organization.

Clause 6

The Secretary shall submit an end of the year report.

Clause 7

The Secretary shall be a member of the Executive Board and Executive Committee.

## Appendix C: Constitutional Amendment

### Article III: The Executive Branch

#### Section 7: Secretary

##### Clause 1

A student shall become the Secretary upon appointment by the President and confirmation by a majority vote of the Student Senate.

##### Clause 2

The Secretary shall be authorized to:

- A. ~~Independently enforce~~ Keep track of the absences as defined by the absence policy as adopted by the Student Government for all positions except for their own. The absence policy of the Secretary shall be maintained by the Executive ~~Committee~~ Board;
- B. Keep the records and governing documents of the Student Government up to date in coordination with the Speaker and Information Technology Director;
- C. Ensure the governing documents are up to date and publicly available;
- D. Compile, with the assistance of relevant members of the Student Government, an the End of Year Report;
- E. Inform members of the Student Government that a veto has been filed upon receiving the written account of the veto from the President.

##### Clause 3

The Secretary may not hold any additional position on the Student Government, except for chair of an ad hoc committee.