

Student Government Resolution 092.011
Resolution Endorsing Freshman Seminar within Future Curricular Models

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 mission; and
- According to Arete (12), the most substantial change that could be made to future curricular models would be the creation and implementation of a Freshman Seminar such as the one proposed as a common element to the next curriculum; and
- Within this course, Arete (12) demands that a significant writing and speaking requirement, along with a beginning focus on interdisciplinary thinking and opening the eyes of students to new types of thinking; and
- This Freshman Seminar would serve as an introduction to the University and its structure, Arete (21); and
- Arete (11) states the course should implement a summer reading project, including a presentation during Truman Week, to stress learning through original works; and
- According to the data obtained during the Spring 2009 Commission Survey, 58% of students support a first year seminar. Furthermore, 77% support a writing enhanced portion, and 74% support a speaking enhanced portion within this seminar; and
- These seminar courses should be taught strictly by professors who demonstrate record of good student review, Arete (11); and
- According to the 2004 Interview Projects, 23% of students reported “having a good professor” was the experience that contributed most to their education in the liberal arts; and
- According to the Phase II report of the Commission on Undergraduate Curriculum, a first year seminar should introduce:
 - The value of seeing an issue from multiple perspectives
 - Lay the foundation for interdisciplinary thinking
 - Stress active learning through critical questioning, speaking, listening, discussing, read and writing extensively about original works
 - Require students to complete a research or creative project
 - Meet the outcomes of a writing-enhanced course
 - Meet the outcomes of a speaking-enhanced course
 - Introduce the University rubric
 - Be the source of the student’s first portfolio submissions; and
- A November 2009 Student Curriculum Survey* suggests that 45.1% of students suggest that they would be supportive of replacing the Writing as Critical Thinking requirement with an additional Writing-Enhanced class compared to 21.1% who oppose this; and

*Survey had 473 respondents, was administered for 5 days from Nov 1 to Nov 6 and included a representative sample of the various students at Truman based on the number of years they have been here. Including 324 who had taken at least 1 Writing Enhanced class.

- This same survey also suggests that 28.1% of students suggest that they would be supportive of replacing the Introduction to Public Speaking requirement with 3 speaking enhanced classes compared to 52.0% who oppose this; and
- The survey also suggests that at least 42% of students feel campus could benefit from a Writing-Enhanced, Speaking-Enhanced Freshman Seminar compared to at least 45% of students who felt the class could worsen the first semester experience; and
- Opinion collected from the October 2009 student forums show concerns about lowering the quality of teaching by moving to a Freshman Seminar instead of requiring Writing as Critical Thinking and Introduction to Public Speaking; and
- The November 2009 Student Curriculum Survey suggests that 63.8% of students felt that Writing as Critical Thinking did not improve their writing; and
- The November 2009 Student Curriculum Survey suggests that 30.9% of students felt that Writing Enhanced classes did not improve their writing compared to 27.2% who thought it only improved their writing in the discipline the class was in and 34.9% who thought it generally improved their writing; and
- According to the 2005 Graduating Student Questionnaire, students rated Writing as Critical Thinking as the least adequate Liberal Studies Program (LSP) course, with a rating of 2.78 on a scale from 1 to 4; and
- According to Arete (11), it is critical that the public speaking courses that are taught at this university be interdisciplinary in nature and fulfilled as early as possible; and
- The November 2009 Student Curriculum Survey suggests that 52.5% of students felt that Public Speaking did help their speaking skills; and
- Student opinion voiced at October 2009 student forums suggest that Introduction to Public Speaking is not taken seriously as a course and that there is very little real learning occurring due to standards being too low; and
- Opinion at the October forums also suggested that a better test out procedure is strongly encouraged for both Writing as Critical Thinking and Introduction to Public Speaking; and
- Student opinion also suggested that a Freshman Seminar course could provide:
 - A more major related experience than Eng 190 and Comm 170
 - Stronger standards for writing and speaking than the two current introductory courses
 - Provide a way to place students into those remedial courses should a student struggle; and
- Furthermore, the two courses should be kept but for the remedial writers and speakers of the university, some type of course be formed to help in their progress, according to the October Student Forums; and
- The Phase 1 Report from the Commission on Undergraduate Curriculum suggests that a well constructed curriculum would challenge and engage students (18); and
- Students expressed opinion at the October Student Forums that speaking and writing enhanced courses should be rigorous, and that at least one of each should be taken outside of the major area of study for a student; and

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

- The Student Government supports the inclusion of the following as elements of Truman State University's next curricular model; and
 - A Writing-Enhanced, Speaking-Enhanced Freshman Seminar, taught strictly by faculty members who possess a demonstrated record of good student reviews, to be required of all incoming freshman students
 - Replacing the current Essential Skills-Writing Requirement (Writing as Critical Thinking and 3 Writing-Enhanced course including JINS) with a requirement of 4 Writing-Enhanced courses, including JINS and the Freshman Seminar
 - Replacing the current Essential Skills-Speaking Requirement (Introduction to Public Speaking) with a requirement of 3 Speaking-Enhanced courses, including Freshman Seminar

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY DIRECTS THAT,

- Additional copies of this resolution are disseminated to University President Darrell W. Krueger, VPAA/Provost Troy Paino, Dean of Student Affairs Lou Ann Gilchrist, Faculty Senate, and Undergraduate Council.

Passed November 8, 2009
By a Vote of 11 – 4 – 0

JoEllen Flanagan
President of the Student Association

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