

Speaker End of the Year Report
Owen Smith, 2021-2022 Speaker
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Introduction and Overview

Hello! Congrats on becoming the Speaker. The speakership is an interesting and fun job. In this role, you coordinate with people across StuGov to ensure the organization is functioning efficiently. This multifaceted role can pull you in a lot of different directions. Some weeks, my job was easy. Others, it took up a significant amount of time. I maintained neutrality on most issues, but always tried to encourage the body to be better - more specific, diligent, etc. I was also rather hard-nosed on the rules. The Speaker can't change the way the body thinks or what it will do, but you can set it up for success in a variety of ways. I hope this report will familiarize you with the responsibilities and tools of the Speakership.

First Things First: Knowing the Governing Documents

As Speaker and Ethics Justice, you are the body's authority on the governing documents: the Standing Rules and the Constitution. Read them! You will benefit from doing so. You never know when you're going to need these pieces of knowledge, but they will come up. Understanding these documents' layouts will help you be prepared to pull them up and find things as needed.

While the Constitution takes precedence over the Standing Rules, the Standing Rules are much more relevant to the day-to-day operations of the body than the Constitution.

One thing I noticed with a good understanding of the Standing Rules was when others were not fulfilling all of their duties. It is not your job to make people do their job, but you might ask people about things to redirect them onto the right path. You are the main check on the executive and legislature, after all.

Running General Body Meetings

1. Preparing the Agenda

- a. The Speaker prepares and sends out the agenda for each meeting. I had a Google Doc template agenda that I made a copy of for each week as soon as I heard something for that week's meeting. I also schedule-sent agenda emails for Friday afternoons so I wouldn't forget as the weekend approached.
- b. Be sure to coordinate with the EBoard about appointments and money motions for the agenda, especially early on in the fall and spring semesters.

2. Show Up Early

- a. To be on-time is to be early, to be on-time is to be late. Show up to meetings about 15 minutes beforehand to make sure the Conference Room is unlocked (and call U&I Staff if it isn't) and set things up. Don't forget the gavel!

3. Roberts Rules

- a. We run our meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order. They dictate how discussion works, motions that can be made, speaking limits, and much more.
- b. A background on Robert's Rules is helpful to be Speaker, but is not necessary. I had almost no knowledge of Robert's Rules, and looked up specific motions only

when necessary. If you have been on the body before and paid attention during meetings, you should understand how this works.

4. Speaker's List

- a. The Speaker moderates discussions and keeps the Speaker's List. It is a list of people who want to talk during speaking time. The order is usually the order in which people raise their hands, but I often felt it necessary to alter the Speaker's List to get alternating views or introduce new voices into the conversation.
- b. Keep track of speakers with a method that works best for you. I used pen and paper, but using a tablet or computer is good too. Be sure to keep an eye on Zoom so those folks don't get left out. (Although, I would prefer if Zoom meetings stopped being used entirely - no one on Zoom is ever engaged.)

5. Fostering Discussion

- a. We want to improve life on this campus for all students. With that in mind, there is always more we can do to engage our members in discussion during meetings.
- b. I tried/considered various things, including:
 - i. Switching up the order of items on the agenda
 - ii. The layout of the Conference Room: everyone is so far away!
 - iii. Providing better training to new members on how to participate in discussion: this is something we failed to do during Retreat and the first General Body Meetings
- c. I also participated in discussions and left comments on every resolution to help clarify their purpose and scope. Of course, I never took a public position on the issue. Whether you do this is entirely up to you.

6. Extraordinary Situations and Meeting Adaptations

- a. The body discussed a resolution which caused 50+ students to show up to a GenBody Meeting. This necessitated conversations with the EBoard, our Staff Advisor, and the Title IV Coordinator to make sure the discussion around this issue was impartial while also taking into account its sensitive nature.
- b. We moved to the larger Activities Room to accommodate the crowd and set a time limit of 2 minutes on speeches to allow everyone an opportunity to speak. I regret making those changes. I now feel that if people want to come, we should let them, and proceed as normal as possible.
- c. Be prepared to switch up meeting times and locations (or cancel them outright) around breaks and holidays as needed. Plan for this with the EBoard in advance as you may need different room reservations.

Ethics Justice

1. The Speaker is also the Ethics Justice. If someone reports an ethics violation to you, be prepared to work with the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Edwards, to determine if you should create a secret Ethics Hearing Board with members you think can be impartial. The process is different each time, so rely on the Standing Rules, Constitution, advisors, and your best judgement to reach a fair outcome.
2. You also have the ability to prosecute ethical violations yourself, should you see fit to do so - but use that discretion carefully and only when absolutely necessary.
3. The Ethics Justice also must oversee the FAC Grievance Process when organizations appeal a funding decision made against them. Take a look at the FAC's Constitution at

fac.truman.edu for an idea of what you'll be expected to do in this role. Coordinate with the FAC President and the Staff Advisor if you have questions on this.

Elections

This is a big job for the Speaker and there are many moving parts to consider. I was in charge of running the Spring and Fall 2021 elections, and the Spring 2022 election. My report as Elections Administrator from Spring 2021 can be found [here](#). For brevity's sake, the only points here are things not included in that report. The Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 election results are included at the end of this report.

1. Plan for fall elections early

- a. Fall elections happen in September. They'll be on you before you know it, so preparation for them is necessary over the summer. Specifically, you'll want to have the elections handbook ready to be first read at the first or second meeting of the fall semester. This also means working with the Faculty Advisor to put together an Elections Hearing Board early too.
- b. A timeline of when Truman Week events, social media promotions, tabling, and other aspects of running the election will occur is helpful for you, if not the entire EBoard.

2. Changes to Awarding Positions

- a. This year, we made changes to the governing documents related to making and senior senators. Previously, senior senators needed 2 years of StuGov experience - we reduced it to only 1 year of experience. This change will start **with the Fall 2022 election**.
- b. Beyond that, we have changed the way we award our positions. Before, a freshman could run as *either* an incoming or voting senator. And, those qualifying as senior senators could choose whether to run as *either* a senior or voting senator. People strategically declared for one position or the other to run in the less competitive race. This caused problems like those illustrated in [this document](#) - someone who chooses wrong and actually chooses a more competitive race might lose a spot to someone with fewer votes.
- c. We rewrote the rules so someone can only run for one type of senator: freshmen run for incoming, people with 1+ year of StuGov experience for senior, graduate students for graduate, all others as voting.
- d. From there, all candidates run in one combined ballot. Within the single ballot, voters can vote for as many people as there are total senator spots up for grabs (incoming + senior + graduate + voting). For example, in the Spring 2022 election: 3 senior + 12 voting = 15 votes for each person. At the conclusion of the election, you will go through the ballot and first pick the highest vote-getting incoming, senior, and graduate senators and award them their spots. Then, remove all the winning senators and go through and award voting senator positions. This way, if an incoming/senior/graduate candidate doesn't win that spot but still gets more votes than a lot of voting senators, they can still be elected. (See an example [here](#).)
- e. This is convoluted, but results in the most popular candidates getting elected. If you have questions, reference the document above or email me. Or make further changes - these rules aren't set in stone.

3. Elections Admin Email!
 - a. Using my personal Truman email for elections was a huge pain. Therefore, I asked IT to make a new email specifically for the Speaker to use during elections, stugovelectionsadmin@truman.edu. This way, we can separate elections related things from our personal things and won't need to change emails in the Elections Handbook every time there's a new Speaker.
 - b. I will be sure to give the password info to the Speaker after me, but if we ever get locked out of the account, IT can reset it for us if we ask them (I recommend going to them in-person if you need to do such a thing).
4. Presidential Debate
 - a. In the Spring, anticipating two tickets for the presidential race, I coordinated with the U&I and TMN to host a 30-45 minute presidential debate on the first day of active campaigning.
 - b. We had this planned well in advance. If you want to do it, start thinking about it and reaching out early so you can get the room reservation in.
 - c. A TMN moderator hosted and we provided a timer and the questions for the tickets. For a document with the rules for this debate, see [here](#).
 - d. We didn't end up having the debate because one ticket dropped out, but I have no doubt such an event would get students thinking more about what StuGov can do on campus and encourage them to vote.

Governing Documents Review Board

The Speaker can chair the Gov Docs Board if they write a letter to the President detailing rules changes they think need to be addressed and the President issues an Executive Order allowing the Board to be created. This board often draws in the most passionate members of StuGov, and managing it requires tact and grace at times. For clarification on Gov Docs topics, please see below or the Gov Docs folder under 2021-2022 in the StuGov shared Google Drive.

1. Elections/Voting Reform (see above)
2. Appropriations
 - a. We addressed the Appropriations Committee this year. Most notably, we clarified that individual students are eligible to receive Appropriations funding.
 - b. Future Speakers and Treasurers should be aware that the limit of the Appropriations funding for each application (as of this report, \$650/group) is codified in the Standing Rules. These rules must be changed should the body want to give more or less funding to groups.
3. Attendance/Absences
 - a. We clarified the absence policy by defining excused and unexcused absences. Also, the Secretary is now obligated to create a form people fill out when they need to have an absence excused. Members now get one unexcused absence per weekly meeting they attend (including Gen Body, Excomm, committee meetings, and office hours). This *should* make it easier to track, as non-emergency absences that aren't filled out using the form are counted as unexcused.
4. ESFAC/AFAC/OAF
 - a. These committees are usually disorganized, AFAC especially. I strongly recommend that future committees get feedback from past AFAC chairs on how we can best rewrite their rules.

- b. On OAF, we were able to achieve significant progress. We got SAB, FAC, and ourselves to add sections to our rules about the President working with the other fee based orgs to choose OAF members.
 - c. Additionally, Dr. Michael Barnes, who directs the accounting graduate program, has agreed to work with OAF in the future with his students. Those students should be a great way to consistently fill all the chair and at-large positions on OAF to ensure the review process takes place as scheduled. We shall see if that actually occurs in the coming years. Please take care to monitor OAF to make sure it's functioning!
 - d. The ESFAC slate this year had a lot of things on it. A problem has been people requesting funding for something they consider important without checking with the people who operate the place where the project will be. We may consider putting a point in ESFAC's rules about ensuring those asking for funds do just that.
5. Membership
- a. This Spring went poorly from a recruitment standpoint. We had just 6 senatorial candidates 20 hours before the end of candidate declaration (although more later declared). Please talk with your EBoard about how you can fundamentally change StuGov, perhaps via our rules, to attract more members. Ideas include an internal activity position, like a social chair to coordinate events among members, and reducing the event-planning obligations of our numerous committees.

Working with the EBoard

This point is covered in other sections of this report, but it bears repeating: work with your EBoard! Things to coordinate with them are:

1. Elections: dates, rules, poster making, publicizing, etc.
2. Fall Retreat: After fall elections, the EBoard and Speaker coordinate to have a day of training and speakers for the rest of the body. Making sure the rest of the body actually gets some relevant skills from this are important. Perhaps a mock meeting or something to get them comfortable with discussion...? But you can do so much with this!
3. Agendas: business, money motions, appointments, special scenarios
4. Their goals: finding appointees for minor committees, being receptive to their ideas about meeting rules, how they can use/revise rules to make the body more efficient
5. Any questions about your role or difficult decisions you have to make!

Misc.

1. The Email List
 - a. When you send the agenda, send it to stugov@truman.edu. This is an email list (not one email), and is tricky to work with at times. To edit the people on it, you must type specific commands in the body of an email and send it to majordomo@truman.edu:
 - b. Adding: approve step4qaz subscribe stugov abc1234@truman.edu
 - c. Removing: approve step4qaz unsubscribe stugov abc1234@truman.edu
 - d. Check who's on the list: who stugov
 - e. [This Google Sheet](#) makes adding/removing groups of people easy. Ask IT or the Faculty/Staff Advisors if you need help with this.

2. Transparency

- a. I felt compelled to make sure minutes, resolutions, budgets, and more were posted to the website. Though few outside of our body use the site, we should be transparent considering we spend a not-insignificant amount of student fee money. Work with your IT Director to ensure this gets done on a regular basis.

3. Historical Resolutions Sheet

- a. Over winter break, I created a spreadsheet that lists all the resolutions StuGov has passed back to 2006-2007 (at least, that I could find from the minutes and documents listed on the website). It is imperfect, but the body, especially committee chairs looking to see what we've done in the past, will hopefully find it useful. If people have further questions about specific resolutions, Laura Bates is a great resource for those questions. I ask that you, or someone else you designate, be in charge of updating this sheet. It is located in the group Google Drive and [here](#).

4. Speaker Google Drives

- a. The Speakers prior to me compiled all their documents into a single Google Drive folder that I can give you access to if you let me know your Truman email. I didn't use it too much, but it was interesting to see the things the folks before me had done to achieve the results they wanted to achieve.

Conclusion

There will be times in this job that you will wonder if the things that you're doing are the best, most productive things you could be doing. This is because many things the Speaker has to do are for the organization as a whole. Sending emails, amending rules, and repeatedly asking for questions only to be met with silence is not glamorous - but it is important. The payoff for doing your job right is looking at the body at the end of your term and seeing it still functioning with a new body ready to take its place. You have the power to make this organization run smoothly. Work with its members, and hopefully you can help make this University a better place.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I will help you in any way I can - Speakers have to stick together.

Respectfully submitted,
Owen N. Smith
2021-2022 Speaker of the Student Senate

Appendix A: Spring 2022 Election Results



Positions Candidates Issues View Ballot Vote Dates Results Allowed Users
Site Pref

Results

Clear Results

457 Students have voted

President/Vice President 1

Kennedy Cooper & Esther Fox 362

Voting/Senior Senator 15

Yasmine Ghenima 263

Sara Klamm 232

Santino Bono 230

Alicia Stout 227

Alexis Cook 222

Colleen O'Reilly 218

Alexa Kolesiak 207

Blaine Smallwood 185

Warren Barge 184

Jay Sitze 159

Chase Strub 147

Owen Hamill 144

Jordan Carlson 133

Layne Nichols 124

Alexandra Thornhill 124

Hannah Park 112

Keegan Vosmith 100

Adam Bishop 92

Kyle Farrell 91

Bryan Garth 70

FAC Chair 1

Dylan de Leon 331

Amendment to Article III of StuGov Constitution

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:
<https://senate.truman.edu/files/2021/11/Resolution-121.004-Absence-Policy-Amendment.pdf>

Yes: 285
No: 25

Amendment to Article II of StuGov Constitution

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:
<https://senate.truman.edu/files/2021/11/Org-Rep-Constitutional-Amendment.pdf>

Yes: 270
No: 34

Amendment to Article IV of StuGov Constitution

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:
<https://senate.truman.edu/files/2021/12/Resolution-121.009-A-Resolution-Amending-Election-Procedures-in-the-Governing-Documents-of-the-Student-Government.pdf>

Yes: 275
No: 31