

Student Government Resolution 121.013
A Resolution Supporting the Creation of Environmentally-Focused Academic Programs
Sponsored by Ethan Kershaw, Vice President; Drew Arends, ESFAC Chair; Blaine Smallwood, Environmental Affairs Chair;

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 University policy and in the fulfillment of the University’s mission; and
- Truman State University has consistently recognized the importance of sustainability to its goals as an institution of higher learning and liberal arts; and
- The university’s Strategic Sustainability Plan lists a goal to “Establish Truman as a leader in sustainability education among COPLAC universities by investing in sustainability related academic programs”¹; and
- COPLAC universities in the Midwest such as University of Illinois-Springfield, Northern State University, and University of Minnesota Morris all have majors relating to environmental studies; and
- That same report recommends that Truman State “Encourage and support research on sustainability, science, and policy,” including establishing funds for “research proposals focused on sustainability and environmental issues”²; and
- Student Government members Ethan Kershaw and Drew Arends hosted an environmental policy forum and found widespread support for “adding more majors and classes about sustainability topics” and “offering student research grants in sustainability topics”³; and
- Students that want to major in anything sustainability related must create their own major through the Interdisciplinary Studies program; and
- This makes advertising to prospective students interested in studying environmental sustainability difficult; and
- The only academic program in the catalog with a sustainability focus at Truman State University is the Environmental Studies minor; and
- An average of 9.2 students have graduated with an Environmental Studies minor over the last 5 years (2017-2021), up from 7.4 over the previous five years (2012-2016); and

¹ <https://sustainability.truman.edu/files/2018/06/PSAC-Strategic-Goals-and-Initiatives-public.pdf> pg. 3

² <https://sustainability.truman.edu/files/2018/06/PSAC-Strategic-Goals-and-Initiatives-public.pdf> pg. 3

³ <https://forms.gle/jESWq7GxrpfyCUkt5> & [Policy Forum Slideshow](#)

- Thirty-eight students are currently pursuing this minor; and
- Without a major program to offer, it is difficult to recruit students interested in pursuing this type of program; and
- According to Dr. Bridget Thomas, there have still been 13 graduates with an Interdisciplinary Studies Major that focused on environmental sustainability since 2016; and
- There are no faculty hired specifically to sponsor this program making it difficult to maintain consistent course offerings; and
- Only eleven courses are cataloged with the ENVS prefix and only three of those are offered on a consistent basis⁴; and
- For the 2022 fall semester, the only ENVS class being provided is a one credit practicum led by student preceptors; and
- While the Office of Student Research does offer some grants and aid to students, there are no funds dedicated to work focused on environmental sustainability⁵; and
- This lack of support for sustainability and environmental programs runs counter to student attitudes and interests; and
- The existence of student organizations including the Environmental Campus Organization, the Student Climate Union, The Wildlife Association, Save The Bees, the Student Government Environmental Affairs Committee, and the Sustainability Office represent consistent student interest in environmental topics⁶.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT:

- Supports the maintenance and improvement of the Environmental Studies minor programs (ENVS) and the creation of a sustainability-focused major program; and
- Suggests that Truman State University hire more faculty interested in teaching sustainability-focused courses with the eventual goal of creating an environmental major program on the level of other COPLAC schools; and
- Recommends the upcoming academic reorganization process be used as an opportunity to place a greater emphasis on sustainability classes and academic programs; and
- Requests that the Truman State University accomplish its stated goal of creating research grants in sustainability topics by applying for appropriate external and internal funding sources; and
- Encourages future Environmental Affairs and Academic Affairs committees to monitor the status of these programs to ensure adequate progress is made toward these goals.

⁴ <http://catalog.truman.edu/ENVS>

⁵ <https://osr.truman.edu/>

⁶ <https://sustainability.truman.edu/get-involved/sustainability-organizations/>

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT:

Additional copies of this resolution be disseminated to President Sue Thomas; Truman State University Board of Governors; Dr. Janet Gooch, Provost; Dr. Elizabeth Clark, Dean of the School of Social and Cultural Studies; Dr. Tim Walston, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics; Members of The President's Sustainability Action Committee (PSAC); Donna Liss, Chair of the PSAC; Marc Becker, Chair of the ENVS Minor Committee; Dr. Drew Sieg, Assistant Professor of Biology; The Office of Student Research; The Environmental Campus Organization; Student Climate Union; The Wildlife Association; Save The Bees; The Sustainability Office; The Environmental Sustainability Fee Accountability Committee; Truman Media Network; and the University Archives.

Passed 11-1-1, April 10, 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "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