

**Truman State University Student Government**  
**Sixth Session of the 2021-2022 Executive Committee**  
**October 23rd, 2022**

**Convened: 6:23 PM**

- 1) Preliminary Items**
- 2) Auxiliary Reports**
- 3) Executive Reports**
- 4) Discussion Items**

- a) Cooper: I will show you the apparel I designed for all Student Government members. I looked into sweatpants, but they were expensive and we only have \$500 for merchandise.
- b) Cooper: The student body has gotten a lot smaller recently. Just from conversations with Laura Bates, Student Government is supposed to fulfill the needs of a student body of 6,500. We think we have too many positions for the student body we currently have. I've had discussions with administration and people here, but I want to get your ideas. The first thing suggested is reducing the amount of voting senator positions. The second option is to restructure our committees. In the past, Student Government has had fewer committees. The Environmental Affairs Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and Health, Wellness, & Safety were hosted under the Student Affairs Committee. I was chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee last year with three people on it, but it was super hard because there were so few people on the committee, and we couldn't tackle all of the projects we wanted to do. By the end of last year, there were two people. On the other hand, committees with eight people got a lot more done. Maybe we can restructure the committees a bit to fix this issue.
  - i) Bono: I'm somewhat in favor of restructuring our committee structure. There are a lot of senators who weren't engaged in our meeting— people are on their phones, people aren't talking in discussion, and people aren't showing up to the meetings at all. Elections are supposed to be competitive, but they aren't right now, and they haven't been in a while. The passion for Student Government to thrive can be discovered during elections if they're competitive. The concern about restructuring committees to where a lot of committees are under Student Affairs is that it's a struggle to get everyone to meet at the same time.
  - ii) Cooper: I think if we restructure the number of voting senator positions, we would have to change the committees around. All of the committee sizes are relatively the same this year. I think we should look into having the exact number of representatives in proportion to the number of enrolled students we have.

- iii) Cook: Could we look into nearby schools with relative student body size?
  - (1) Cooper: Yes, I have. At other schools, rather than electing at-large representatives, they appoint people based on their departments (such as music, political science, etc.) I don't think that's necessarily the best idea just because we already don't have enough people interested in Student Government, and I can't imagine trying to find someone from every department.
- iv) Stout: In terms of having quality people on the body, I think some people are in Student Government or think it is appealing just to pad their resumes. I think that's a real concern, but I hope the Governing Documents Review Board can remedy that with their updated absence policy. At the same time, if you make the voting pool smaller, it isn't a question of who is qualified the most to join Student Government, it would be who is the most popular and can garner the most votes. At the same time, I think there's people in Student Government who had to be pushed to run, and who do good work here. So, I don't know the answer.
- v) Hammock: Committee restructuring may be easier this year to accomplish since it's already a year of transition with all of the new branding and logo-related stuff. I know we have committee chairs, but we can combine committees and have people just split into multiple projects.
- vi) Hammock: There are a lot of different majors that Student Government could use to widen their perspectives. For example, Alexis and I aren't even Political Science students; we're Communication majors. But, I think there's a lot of people in our classes who would be good members of the body. Maybe we can appeal to people outside of the Political Science department?
  - (1) Cooper: Part of the reason why we have a lot of Political Science students is because we table at the Political Science New Majors Welcome. I see where you're coming from though. In the past, there has been more variety in majors that aren't Political Science. I think people from other majors would be interested if they knew about us. A part of our PR strategy is making sure we actually do things that have our name attached to us. I think the biggest form of PR is doing things that are good for the students.
- vii) Smallwood: I think recently, a lot of people on the outside believe Student Government is a political body, but it isn't. I know some people from my major (Music Therapy) that have no idea why I'm in Student Government because they don't think I'm political. I support having people from other departments be representatives on the body.
- viii) Barge: I think restructuring committees is a good idea. What we need to do is a better job at prioritizing certain tasks and projects. It seems that we're all working on small-scale projects, where some of the bigger ones can easily

fall through the cracks. The nature of what we have right now is... every committee has their list of projects they want to accomplish. Some committee chairs are dedicated to a big project and some do smaller projects throughout the year. If we were able to reform committees, we may have to pick and choose what projects we work on. I would rather we do projects really well instead of trying everything and not excelling in it. If we cut down on the things Student Government does, that would help. I don't know if I would be in support of cutting the number of voting senator positions. I don't want people to just pad their resumes, but I think tackling that problem happens when there is an influx of people applying to be in Student Government, and that isn't happening now. We don't have competitive elections so I don't think we can be too picky about that.

- ix) Cooper: There's been a big donation which they think will bring in more students, but I don't think it'll bring us to the 6,500 that we had at one point. We are consistently having open voting positions every semester. I don't bring this up because of the quality of people we have on the body, but more so the fact that we always have open positions. I don't really know if we should have the number of open positions we have if they are consistently not being filled.
- x) Owsley: I think restructuring would be interesting— I don't know if I believe it would be good or bad. On one hand, we want to have people on the body to do projects, but on the other hand, we want to have quality people. I think getting rid of the Zoom option was a really good idea because we had some really good conversation today.
- xi) Zerk: I'm a fan of restructuring and I like the idea of consolidating. Instead of all of these committees being spread thinly, we could combine similar projects— for example, the Environmental Sustainability Fees Accountability Committee and the Environmental Affairs Committee.
- xii) Owsley: I looked at the different "schools" Truman has, such as the School of Business and School of Arts and Letters. I don't think it's unreasonable to create positions that are housed in these different schools. I know the hesitation to do that is about the fact that our current body consists mainly of Political Science majors, and if we only had a few representatives from the School of Cultural and Social Sciences, the bulk of our body goes away. We have to weigh whether that's good for us few people in charge, or good for the future existence of the organization. There's a lot of different schools that aren't necessarily political, but they would be a good addition.
  - (1) Cooper: What if we did a voting position from each school and then a few at-large representatives?
    - (a) Bono: I like that idea. I think having one perspective from each school would diversify our Student Government.

Having some at-large representatives would be good, too. It would be good for transitions into each session— that way there are some members who understand the history and traditions of the organization.

xiii) Bono: I know there's a lot of feedback with the number of voting senators. I think that a few senators less than what we currently have would greatly benefit the body.

xiv) Fox: Restructuring the committees would be good, and then we can look into the numbers of removing senators. As someone who is mainly around arts and writing students, they are intrigued as to why I'm involved in Student Government because they see us as political students. It's hard to battle our reputation. I wish we could strengthen the communication from everyone in our organization. There's so many people in our current body that I don't know what they're interested in. The best way we can put student concerns up for discussion is if we have solid ground internally. I think there isn't enough talk about the student perspective.

xv) Sitze: I think cutting seats is something we should consider and do. I am looking for committee members, but I think people serving in multiple committees should be normalized.

(1) Cooper: Being on two committees is allowed. Sara Klamm was on my committee and the Environmental Affairs Committee last year, and she did well in both.

xvi) Smallwood: I personally agree with restructuring committees. I don't know how the Environmental Affairs Committee would fit under other committees. What ideas do you have to go out to other majors?

(1) Cooper: A big part of that is how we present ourselves to the student body. I think the rebrand is a good way for us to change the perspective of Student Government. I think we could do an educational video about what Student Government is. People have no idea what Student Government does, and that's part because it's a very large organization that does many different things. We have been doing a poor job of making what we do clear.

xvii) Stout: I don't know if we can diminish the voting senators positions right now, but if this discussion comes again, we should talk about the material benefit of each side. When it comes to our reputation, it isn't great, and I think that is the inherent politicization of Student Government. That is a reputation that precedes us.

(1) Ghenima: I think having a tabling event at the Student Union Building for people to learn about us and bring their concerns to us. It's different from Purple Friday because we are directly soliciting students' opinions.

- xviii) Cook: There's been a lot of talk about moving committees like Diversity and Inclusion, Environmental Affairs, Parking Appeals, and Purple Friday under Student Affairs. I don't necessarily love that idea because I think that puts a lot of weight on the Student Affairs Committee chair. I do, however, think having subprojects under the Student Affairs Committee that other current committees such as Diversity and Inclusion normally work on, would be good. For example, we wouldn't have subcommittee chairs, but we would have big projects that could be diversity-focused or environmentally-focused. I bring this up because if I wasn't Secretary, I would likely be on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, but the environmental justice event that Blaine and Yasmine are working on is something I would definitely want to help with. As it currently stands, I would likely have to join Blaine's committee to help them with that, but maybe I don't want to take on the work of a whole other committee.
- (1) Cooper: That's sort've what the Student Activities Board does.
- xix) Smallwood: Multiple committees could burn people out. There's a lot of people who are burnt out because they have a large workload— in Student Government, in other organizations, in their classes, etc. I would be cautious about overworking us. I do like Alexis' idea though because members could pick and choose what projects they want to work on.
- xx) Bono: The Governing Documents Review Board should look into secondary committee chairs— not necessarily there being multiple committee chairs. Maybe we don't lump all of it under the Student Affairs Committee because that could be a lot on the chair. I like Alexis' idea.
- xxi) O'Reilly: Putting all of it back on the Student Affairs Committee may not be a good thing... speaking as the current Student Affairs Committee chair. But making it more like the Student Activities Board would be cool.
- xxii) Owsley: I am not suggesting that we put more work on anyone when I say this, but something governments often do is politicians will send newsletters to their constituents. Maybe every two months, we send a mass email to the student body that recaps what we've done and what we are going to do in the future.
- (1) Cooper: We still do that. We're supposed to send one every month, but it hasn't been done in a while. In the emails right now, we include every money motion and resolution that has been passed.
- c) Cooper: If you have any project updates, please let me know. Come prepared to next week's ExComm with who is working on projects, the timeline for them, and what you need from Esther and I.

**Adjourned: 7:04 PM**