

Forum adds to SAB feedback

Ben Yarnell
for the Index

Freshman April Johnson is part of a minority she probably did not even know existed a few days ago.

Johnson said she made sure to take part in the Student Activities Board's "Big Survey" just as she has done with every other survey that has come her way.

"I think [my voice] is heard," Johnson said. "I'm sure [SAB] follows through as well as they can."

However, Johnson's vote is one of only a relative few that have been voiced. Only about 20 percent of Truman students responded to the survey.

Freshman Ashlee Stoddard, a member of SAB's research and development committee, said SAB's hope for the survey was that it could find out students' satisfaction concerning all programs.

The difference between this survey and past surveys distributed by SAB is that the others are more specified to a certain event, such as concerts and comedians, she said. This survey encompasses these along with movies and

other programs SAB sponsors, she said.

SAB also hosted an open forum last Monday in the SUB Activities Room, which served as a good way for SAB to put comments behind the statistics from the survey, Stoddard said.

"We were looking for student feedback, and so we went ahead and did the Big Survey to get statistically accurate student feedback to scientifically support the things that, hopefully, we will find out at the open forum," Stoddard said.

Freshman Meredith Smith, who attended the forum, said she thought it was needed for the Truman community.

"There needs to be more of a connection amongst the students and the organizations at Truman," Smith said. "The more people we get involved with these forums, ... the better of an idea Truman can get about the diversity of the students."

Stoddard said her committee was anxious about the forum because it was the first time SAB has asked for the students to express their opinions through a forum.

Stoddard said one statistic that startled her committee was that 67 percent of students who completed the survey did not know that a large portion of their student activities fee helps fund SAB's budget for events such as the semester concerts.

Freshman Blake Niemann said he would be willing to raise the fee to bring in more well-known acts that he would like to see, such as Kenny Chesney, Kid Rock and Simple Plan.

"I bet a lot of people would," Niemann said. "My parents pay my tuition. I wouldn't mind, and I doubt my parents would mind."

However, Niemann said he did not participate in the survey because he doesn't think TruView is the best setting for the survey.

"If they set them up outside the cafeteria and gave out candy for completing it, I would probably do it," Niemann said. "I would even go for it if they said I had a chance to win something like a free dinner to Patterson's. It's more like gambling that way."

One criticism of SAB has been that it has suggested that certain acts are available to play at Tru-



Kyle Hill/Index
Senior Tyler Patterson and sophomore Rachele Williams explain Student Activities Board's budget breakdown to students who attended the SAB forum Monday evening in the SUB Activities Room.

man when in fact they are beyond the budget, but Stoddard said this is not true.

"We contact our agent, and we get something called a 'morning report,'" Stoddard said. "Every single act that comes back from the morning report is within our price range."

Stoddard said sometimes an act will be unavailable for the specified time frame, or the band will raise its prices because of an increase in popularity.

When this occurs, SAB is forced to move down the list of choices voted on by the student body.

Stoddard said actions result-

ing from students' comments could be implemented as soon as next semester.

"Obviously, if we have to make a huge change, it's not going to happen immediately, but if they are small things that students really want, they can be worked in," Stoddard said.

Incentives tempt students to fill out surveys

Kelly Albright
for the Index

The surveys on TruView offer prizes constantly: "Take this survey, and win an iPod," "Win a \$20 gift certificate - take this survey," among other appealing incentives.

The good news is, students who take the surveys really can win the offered prizes.

Junior Natalie Gorski won a \$25 gift certificate to Hastings about a year ago through an Information Technology Services survey offered on TruView.

She said she usually takes all of the surveys offered, either through the links on TruView or through e-mail, but her prize gave her more motivation.

"Now that I've won, I always take them because I know that you actually can win," Gorski said.

Sophomore Kathryn Martin hasn't

been as lucky. Although she takes the surveys about once or twice every month, about 15 total throughout her time at Truman, she never has won a prize, she said.

"I definitely wish I would win," Martin said.

Typically, she said she only takes the surveys that offer incentives.

"If they e-mail me and are nice about it, I will [take any survey]," she said. "But most of the time, it's all about the prizes."

Even the prizes aren't enough to entice some students. Junior Megan Page said that even though she is interested in the prizes, she rarely takes the surveys.

"Pretty much it's like a time thing," Page said. "It takes like five minutes to do it, and that's just too much."

She said she sometimes will start a survey but then stop before she gets to the end.

"I've tried to take them before, but

they take a really, really long time, ... so I usually give up," she said.

Marty Eisenberg, dean of the Residential College Program and associate vice president for academic affairs, recently e-mailed every Truman student a survey about campus diversity.

Instead of offering one big prize like many surveys do, he decided to offer a larger number of smaller prizes, including one \$25 gift certificate to Wal-Mart, one \$25 gift certificate to Hastings, five \$10 iTunes gift certificates and 25 purple Truman T-shirts.

"I think it makes more sense to have more small prizes ... to give more people a chance at winning," Eisenberg said.

He said he wasn't sure if the number of prizes offered had a significant impact on the number of responses received, but he was satisfied with the response rate so far. In the first 24 hours that the survey was offered, 20 percent of students responded, he said.

"I'm pleased ... because we were concerned that the survey was a little long," Eisenberg said.

This survey was a little different than most, however, so that could impact the response rate. Instead of offering the survey through a link on TruView, the survey was sent by an e-mail invitation from University President Barbara Dixon and was not a Truman survey.

He said Educational Benchmarking Inc. administered the survey through its software, which allows the company to do a detailed analysis on the results.

Each individual e-mail offering the survey contained its own individual link to the survey, which is why the survey could not have a link posted on TruView, he said.

A typical survey offered through e-mail or a link on TruView usually is not too complicated, however. Greg Marshall, Web developer for ITS, said the

user names of the people who completed the survey and their responses are stored in separate Web pages.

The winner is picked randomly by a computer program from the list of user names, and a Web address containing the winner's name is sent to the organization, he said.

"I'm totally out of the picture, which I kind of like because then that's totally impartial and totally not related to us," Marshall said.

On average, about 200 to 300 people take the surveys offered through TruView although Marshall said he has seen some surveys get about 700 responses. He said the number of responses depends a lot on the length and subject matter of the survey. The number of surveys offering prizes has increased, he said.

"Recently, the majority have something," Marshall said. "The amount or value [of the prize] varies."

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