

MAC to host social justice leadership conference

BY PAIGE YUNGERMANN
TMN Reporter

The Truman State Multicultural Affairs Center is working to organize a Social Justice Leadership Summit for the first time April 15-16.

The conference will be open to anyone and designed to educate people about social justice issues. Jerad Green, program coordinator for Multicultural Affairs, said this conference is particularly important because of the recent events at the University of Missouri.

Green said the tentative plans for the conference are to have a welcome reception the first night, where there will be a dinner and showing of "Out in the Night," a movie about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities within the black community. Green said there will be workshops and presentations about social justice for students to attend the next day.

Green said the conference will be free this year and, if it is a success, the MAC will consider charging participants during the future. He said the event is being funded through the MAC's budget and sponsorship.

Green said the purpose of this conference is to help students become global leaders in society through the pillars of inclusion, equity, sustainability and change.

"It's a way to move Truman to that next level of leadership and get people

thinking about the importance of social justice," Green said. "It's moving individuals from being aware that there are issues to developing the skills to create action."

Green said the MAC currently is looking for students to be part of the planning committee for this conference and to volunteer during the conference. He said anyone who wants to get involved with the planning committee can email him at jegreen@truman.edu.

Anyone who wants to attend the conference will be able to register next semester, Green said. During that time, undergraduate students also can apply to present about social justice as part of the conference, he said.

This conference will be an extension of the MAC's Diversity Leadership Retreat that takes place during the fall semester, Green said. It also will be following the Student Senate's annual spring Diversity Week, Green said.

Green said while anyone can attend this conference, most of the workshops likely will target college students. He said there will be a diversity workshop for Truman faculty during January.

In addition to Truman students, Green said he is trying to promote the conference to students at universities throughout Missouri and in neighboring states. He said his goal is to have 150-200 students attend the conference.

Multicultural Affairs Center hosts Social Justice Leadership Summit on "Equality and Justice NOW"

The conference will focus on four pillars of excellence:

1. Inclusion – the equal and equitable access and participation of diverse identities in any space
2. Equity – when individuals have as much to gain or lose from injustice regardless of their identity, status or affiliation
3. Sustainability – creating a safe space for diversity and inclusion through consistent reinforcement
4. Change – solution to a problem toward equity and justice, achieved through sustainability

Source: mac.truman.edu/diversity-education/social-justice-leadership-summit

"I think that anyone who comes will appreciate the benefits that they get from the conference," Green said. "As college-educated individuals, you should be thinking about what's going on in the world, who's affected by it and what you're doing to impact that, whether it's conscious or unconscious. You will develop the skills and the knowledge to be a global leader in society. This is a great opportunity to learn more about social justice."

Carol Bennett, assistant dean of Multicultural Affairs, said one advantage of this conference is it will encourage dialogue among students about diversity and other social justice issues. She said this conference also will teach students about national and international issues of gender identity, race, class and ethnicity.

Bennett said the conference will benefit students when they leave Kirksville if they plan to live and work in other parts of the world. She said the conference will provide students with experiences and skills they might not gain from a classroom.

"It's important that we keep the momentum of critical thinking going at Truman," Bennett said. "That's what we do at Truman. We're critical thinkers. It adds to the students' experiential, out-of-class learning, which is sometimes more impactful in ways that a lecture can't be."

Freshman Tahj Gayfield, who said he wants to be part of the planning committee, said other students should get involved with the summit because it is a good way to promote diversity and meet others who share that interest.

AAUP members and Paino discuss low faculty salaries

BY JONAH MCKEOWN
TMN Reporter

Members of Truman State's chapter of the American Association of University Professors met with University President Troy Paino last week during an open forum to discuss faculty salaries at Truman, which are some of the lowest in Missouri among comparable institutions.

History professor David Robinson gave a presentation at the beginning of the forum which outlined the data behind the AAUP's claims. Lincoln University is the only comparable institution in Missouri with lower faculty salaries than Truman, according to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Data System.

The AAUP sent out a survey to Truman faculty asking if they were aware Truman faculty were paid less than at comparable institutions. When a majority answered no, the organization called the forum.

Robinson said most people, students included, don't seem to know Truman faculty are paid poorly.

Robinson said one of his concerns is balancing merit and need-

based scholarships, because merit scholarships can often go to students who technically do not need them.

"I want us to be more honest about what we're doing here," Robinson said. "And at whose expense we are doing it."

Robinson, who has been teaching at Truman since 1990, said the AAUP has met with every new provost and president since at least 1985, but the most recent meeting drew a much larger turnout than the usual 20-25 people. He said faculty pay is a tough problem and he wants Paino to make it a priority.

"We've never had a president, at least for very long, who cared about this problem at all," Robinson said. "I've considered [Paino] one of the most capable people ever to land on our campus, and in so many different ways."

Paino gave his own presentation at the forum, highlighting the history and context of the problem of low faculty salaries.

"I'm not coming here trying to argue that our faculty are adequately paid — that's wrong," Paino said. "The question is how we get from where we are to where we would like to be."

Paino said many of the current aspects of Truman, including its mission as a liberal arts and sciences university, were engineered during the 1980s and 1990s — a period when the state of Missouri was making large and consistent investments in higher education. Paino said tuition increases also were common during this period, with an average increase of approximately 11 percent per year from 1986-2005. Two critical sources of revenue — state appropriations, and tuition and fees — have taken hits during more recent years, with state appropriations dropping and fluctuating since 2000, and tuition and fees remaining fairly steady since 2005, according to the data presented at the forum.

The combination of these factors, Paino said, contributes to the constriction of Truman's budget. Truman also provides \$20 million in scholarships to students each year, or about \$3,800 per student, which is significantly higher than any other comparable Missouri institution. Paino said this high figure is important to maintain because of Truman's mission as a highly selective institution, but also factors in the difficulty of attracting students to rural northeast Missouri.

Paino said any plan for increasing salaries will involve balancing the budget elsewhere. He said one option that could be explored is the closure of low-enrollment programs graduating fewer than five students per year.

"I think everyone has to realize that solving the problem is going to involve tradeoffs," Paino said.

Paino said he plans to bring the issue before the Faculty Senate — the representative body of the faculty who are elected on behalf of their departments.

"For me to deal with the formal governance structure, I think I should work with Faculty Senate on this," Paino said. "I'm going to ask them directly on how they'd like to proceed."

Paino presented a five-step plan at the forum that included an additional \$1,000 increase for full professors with six years of service and higher starting salaries to attract

new faculty. Although alternative plans were suggested by faculty at the forum, Paino said anyone wishing to submit an alternative plan should go through the Faculty Senate. He said no alternative plans have officially been submitted.

"I've been proceeding based on the five points I presented at the forum," Paino said. "If the faculty want to go another direction, if they think that that's not addressing the issue quickly enough ... I am open to a different pathway."

Truman has about \$50 million in reserve funds, which Paino said are important to maintain in case of a financial emergency. The amount of money kept in reserve affects Truman's Moody's rating, a metric that describes Truman's ability to pay off debt during the future.

Dave Rector, vice president for administration, finance and planning, said the reserves are to be used for emergencies and not to underwrite expenses such as faculty raises.

"You [could give] them a raise one year, but how are you going to pay for it the next year?" Rector said. "It's one-time money."

Music professor Marc Rice is the president of AAUP at Truman. Rice said the forum was productive, and he appreciated that everyone involved, including Paino, listened attentively.

"I was left with the impression that the administration understands that there is a pretty significant problem [with faculty salaries]," Rice said.

Rice said faculty salaries have been the most pressing issue for AAUP recently, and he said he estimates 70-80 percent of time at AAUP's meetings is taken up with discussions about salaries. He said the AAUP will continue to listen to the faculty and see what the majority support, and eventually will likely draft a proposal to present to the Faculty Senate.

Rice said the issue of salaries is important because it affects the attitude of Truman's faculty.

"Students should be concerned about this issue primarily because it impacts faculty morale, how we feel about being here," Rice said.



Jonah McKeown/TMN

University President Troy Paino speaks at an AAUP-hosted forum to discuss Truman's faculty pay, which is among the lowest in Missouri. Paino said any plan to increase salaries will require balancing the budget elsewhere.

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