A More Inclusive and Accessible Student Senate

As the student governing body of KU, it is imperative to effectively and accurately represent the views of students. To meet this objective, Senate must strive to be inclusive, diverse and accessible to everyone to allow various perspectives be heard when making decisions. To further these goals, we propose the following actions to be taken by the Student Senate:

**Increasing the Number of Appointed Seats**

In order to objectively determine how many organizations and which ones should be appointed student senate seats, the Multicultural Affairs Committee should create a subcommittee at their December 2nd meeting and charge them with developing a selection process. The goal is for the subcommittee to give their recommendation to the Multicultural Affairs Committee by February 17th, to be seen at Full Senate on February 24th.

**Creating an Election Fund for Students**

In order to make the student senate elections more equitable, we propose the creation of an election subsidiary fund, to provide financial support for coalitions and students in need. To determine the logistics and requirements of the fund, President Jessie Pringle will form an ad hoc committee that will meet from December through March and generate legislation to amend the elections code by March 20th.

**Allow More Time for Students to Vote in Student Senate Elections**

It's important that every student has their voice heard during Student Senate elections, regardless of the circumstances. Legislation will be seen at the last cycle of this semester to amend the elections code to allow more time for students to cast their vote.

**Extend Voting Rights to the Student Senate Director of Diversity & Inclusion on the Student Senate Executive Committee**

The Student Senate Executive Committee plays a critical role in guiding the senate body. It’s important that diverse representation is present and heard on this committee. To ensure this, legislation will be seen at the last cycle of this semester to amend SSRR 6.1.2 and grant the Student Senate Director of Diversity & Inclusion full voting rights.

**Resolution of Opposition to Kobach’s SAFE Act**

The Kansas Secretary of State’s voter ID efforts affect student voices at the state level, and it is important to stand up against laws that have discriminatory effects. In order to address the concerns of the legislative issue in regards to college students, a resolution will be drafted over winter break for approval of senators and the final resolution will be submitted for the first legislative cycle of the Spring Semester.

**Increase Support of the Office of Multicultural Affairs**

Years ago, Student Senate worked to make the Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center a reality. Now we reaffirm our commitment to help the OMA by pledging to work with their interim director to advocate for a fee increase during the February fee review process. We hope that additional
funding will help the OMA add staff and new programming, as well as enhance the programs and personnel it already has.

Lastly, Student Senate whole-heartedly believes in the importance and the necessity of the immediate hiring of a new Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA). Dr. Nate Thomas has informed us that the new director will be hired in December 2015. We look forward to the announcement and are excited to work with the new hire on these important issues.

Address Concealed and Carrying of Guns on Campus

Although the preconceived opinion is that students want guns banned on campus, Student Senate has worked with the other KBOR state universities' Student Governments to institute the campus gun survey, which was emailed to all students on Wednesday November 4th. This survey unbiasedly surveys students on their opinions of concealed carry. Dependent on the Docking Institute, a report of the survey results shall be presented to the Board of Regents at their meeting on December 16th, 2015. Upon receiving the results of the survey, we invite students to join us in all higher education and legislative arenas across the state to advocate for the development of new campus policies.

Strengthen our Commitment to Recruiting Underrepresented Students

Bold Aspirations Goal 1 states that “By the year 2022, we aspire to a first-year retention rate of 90 percent and a six-year graduation rate of 70 percent.” We will hold administration to this, and encourage greater plans to think specifically about underrepresented students.

Focus on Underprivileged Schools

When the University of Kansas raised admissions standards in Fall 2015, the effects were felt in less-advantaged urban and rural districts across the state. In order for our University to successfully increase our population of underrepresented students, we must make a commitment to recruiting better in communities across our state. We shall work with the Office of Admissions to set goals by the end of Spring 2016 to increase the number of applicants from less advantaged communities, with a particular focus on the Kansas City Metro Area and Wichita.

Increase Aid and Assistance to Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve Component Personnel and their Families

We acknowledge that the University of Kansas is a top 10 university for Veterans, and continuing access to services is imperative to support our veterans, active duty and reserve students on campus. We propose working to enhance existing services and determine new approaches to assist veterans on campus through focus groups in the month of February. We will explore opportunities for mentoring programs and increased online accessibility for resources.
Veteran’s Lounge

With the Burge Union closing in March 2016, we will ensure that input regarding the improvement and design of the new veterans’ lounge is taken by the appropriate offices. This space deserves to be an on-campus oasis for our veterans and we want to make sure that their interests are well represented in their new and temporary spaces.

Address the Need for Increased Mental Health Services at KU, Particularly for Underrepresented Students

Hiring Culturally Competent Staff

We will support a fee increase in February to expand the staff of CAPS and to decrease the time it takes for students to meet with a counselor. Furthermore we recognize the need for new counselors to be uniquely equipped to address the needs of underrepresented students at the University of Kansas.

Find Space for Expansion

Currently, members of the Student Mental Health Advisory Board are addressing space concerns in Watkins Health Center and across campus. Configuring space within Watkins shall be addressed in January. Senators have already begun work on moving CAPS staff to other locations on campus to better access students and hopes to put counselors in the Office of Multicultural Affairs on a rotating schedule with Watkins. With a fee increase, we hope to allow CAPS staff to reach corners of campus they have not before, and to work better to address the needs of underrepresented students.

Increased Support Services

Under direction of the Provosts’ Office, the Student Senate, CAPS and Bert Nash have been working on drafting an agreement on the relationship between the services available at both clinics. The agreement is being seen by the Student Mental Health Advisory Board in time for February 2016 Fee Review.

Work to Make Cultural Competency Training a Continuous Part of the KU Experience

Inclusion Training for Students

For inclusion training to be effective, it should not take place once, but repeatedly through a student’s academic career. The Jayhawk Jumpstart Program is a mandatory requirement for freshman and transfer students with the purpose of providing students with both campus resources and also a session on social justice, which is led by the OMA during their first weeks.
at KU. In Spring 2016, Student Senate will work with the Office of First Year Experience (OFYE) and the OMA to evaluate and steer the Jayhawk Jumpstart Program for the Fall of 2016.

This fall, the program was able to reach 3200 first year students, accounting for nearly 66% of the 2015 freshman class. By aiding OFYE with promotional efforts we shall work to ensure that 80% of the incoming 2016 freshman class and 90% of the 2017 freshman class participate in Jayhawk Jumpstart during their first week at KU. Furthermore, we will work to incorporate the lessons learned in Jayhawk Jumpstart into first year seminars in each of the professional schools.

To foster continuing education, Student Senate will work with the Student Involvement and Leadership Center (SILC) and the OMA to develop comprehensive training for leaders of student organizations. Furthermore, additional training shall be encouraged of the Student Senate, Center for Community Outreach, and Student Union Activities. We will endeavor to make inclusion training mandatory for SILC registration at the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester.

**Push for the Addition of Questions on Course Evaluations with Regards to a Professor's Respect for Issues of Diversity**

For over a year, Student Senate has explored the status of course evaluations at KU. This year, we introduced a proposal to the Faculty Executive Committee that would put all evaluations online and publish a portion of the results to assist students when selecting classes. In addition to these efforts, we will work to add a question on all course evaluations regarding a professor’s respect for students and diversity. We will work with University Senate to advance this initiative as well as meeting with all of the deans to garner support. Our goal is for these questions to be included on the Spring 2016 evaluation forms. In this way, the departments will be able to identify issues with an instructor’s cultural competency.

**Improve Resources to Address Instances of Discrimination at KU**

The University’s Ombuds office exists to provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff experiencing conflicts, disputes, or complaints. Yet, many are unaware of the services they provide. For individuals dealing with recent traumatic experiences, there needs to be an easy way to get the help and advice they need. We believe that there is a desperate need for a hotline to help people receive answers to their questions and assist with navigating a complex reporting process. We will collaborate with the Ombuds office and other entities to explore the idea of a hotline and work towards creating a helpful and streamlined service by the end of Spring 2016.
The issues of race and diversity have been long standing concerns on our campus. Progress must be made, but it does not come easily nor quickly. It takes time. In order for a community to resolve its largest issues, it must work together as one. To best serve our community, the Jayhawk community, we must move forward as a unified body committed to these to making progress on these issues.

We know that these steps will move us in the right direction, but we hope that this forward momentum never stops. In order for us to ensure these changes take place, we expect continuous accountability.

We look forward to the work ahead, and we hope you’ll join us.

-- Jessie Pringle, Student Body President
-- Zach George, Student Body Vice President
-- Adam Moon, Chief of Staff