Board Report Update

June 2018

Thanks to your continued leadership and support, Truman Center and Truman Project had a very successful start to 2018. Truman trainers and experts took the stage from South Bend, Indiana to the Munich Security Conference, testified before Congress, informed candidates and allied organizations across the nation, and made the case for our values online and over the airwaves. We also led the way on issues from refugees to clean energy, and launched groundbreaking new efforts to help defend our democracy. And finally, we made important investments in growing and strengthening our membership, Chapters, and Expert Groups while continuing to attract new partners and sources of financial support. As we look forward to another great TruCon in a few short days, here are some highlights from the past few months.

**Defending Democracy**

The first quarter of 2018 saw the launch of two products that have represented months of effort between Truman staff and members: our Defending Democracy training module and Stop the Slide, our online, updated monthly authoritarian indications and warning system. These products were crafted with the collaboration of over 50 Truman practitioners and academics who are experts in the field of backsliding democracies, with the intent of communicating these risks to a broad, non-expert community. After their initial roll-out, both products have undergone further refinement and updates with input from partners. We have received great feedback from communities who are interacting with these products, and will for the remainder of 2018 continue to reach new audiences with them.

**Refugees and Border Security on the Hill**

In the first half of 2018, Mike Breen was invited to address members of Congress and staffers on immigration and refugees twice. On 21 February, he brought the security perspective to a panel of policy leaders and advocates from the private sector and the faith community, which addressed a room of staffers from both sides of the aisle. The purpose of this closed-door meeting was to initiate the return of the bipartisan refugee caucus. (Following this, Breen was invited to speak on RCUSA’s press call in March, where he again spoke, this time to press, to the strategic value of admitting refugees.) In April, Breen served as the minority witness for the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee’s National Security Subcommittee hearing on border security. He spoke alongside leaders from the Center for Immigration Studies, National Border Patrol Council, and Texas Department of Public Safety.

**National Security Beyond the Beltway**

In April, Mike Breen and South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg kicked off Notre Dame’s inaugural IDEA Week with a fireside chat on the intersection of national security and innovation. They discussed how smart investment creates strong small cities that make America safer before an audience of roughly 100 people, including more than 20 Truman members. Members from six states came together for the event, as well as for a full afternoon of programing with Mayor Pete.

**Running for Office and Serving in Government**

Truman has 36 members running for state and local office (25 incumbents), and 17 running for the U.S. House of Representatives (3 incumbents). We recently launched two pages on our website to showcase each candidate, continue to encourage local Chapters to support their candidates, and have been supporting values-aligned candidates nationwide with information and messaging on a range of national security issues. Meanwhile, the Women, Peace, and Security program continued with calls hosted by the International Center for Research on Women and EMILY’s List, including a two-hour training on early steps women can take to set themselves up for successful runs for office. Finally, the second meet and greet for Trumans who continue to serve in the federal government took place, drawing members from three agencies and a wide range of classes.

**Chapter and Member Engagement**:

In February, leaders from 14 Chapters and 4 Expert Groups gathered with HQ staff in Austin, Texas for the first-ever leaders retreat. This two-day session covered the new three-year strategic plan as well as results of the membership survey and member focus groups. Leaders then had an opportunity to work in small groups to discuss how to implement components of the strategic plan and 2018 priorities locally, brainstorm opportunities for collaborating with other Chapters and Expert Groups, and share lessons learned. Finally, leaders were given an opportunity to view and provide feedback on Truman’s two newest training modules, Defending Democracy and Bridging the Gap: Tackling Bias, Stereotypes, and Discrimination in National Security.

In February and early March, Truman HQ hosted orientations for new members joining the Defense Council, Security Fellows, and Political Partners, training a total of 125 new members. Following the leaders retreat and orientation, Truman HQ conducted calls or in-person meetings with each of the 16 Truman Chapters to roll-out the strategic plan and answer questions around the process and goals. These discussions came to a close in mid-May, with Chapters now focusing on strategies for program and political engagement over the next three years. In addition to these calls, Chapters held 31 meetings or events from January through April of this year.

Finally, applications for new members launched on May 15, earlier than in past years, with a close date of September 14th. Chapters across the country will be hosting recruitment events with the support of Truman HQ, with details on specific events coming in the weeks and months ahead.

**Policy Expert Groups**

The first five months of 2018 have been focused on recruiting and investing in eight new leaders of the Truman Expert Groups in organizational priority issue areas: Transatlantic Security; Energy and Climate Security; Asia; and Democracy, Development, and Security. These leaders are subject matter experts in their respective fields who have stepped forward to organize the broader Truman expert community to articulate our policy positions, host activities and events, and create products for wider distribution. At the Truman Leaders Retreat, held in Austin, TX in February, these leaders hosted focused brainstorming sessions with Truman Chapter Leaders from all over the country around how to better communicate their policy priorities outside of Washington, DC. Since the retreat, the Truman Expert Groups have surveyed the membership for their policy interests, helped on-board new members at the 2018 Orientations, hosted six events (many in partnership with Truman Chapters), begun collaborating on policy products, collaborated on Truman trainings, and crafted strategic plans for the remainder of the year.

**Training**

Since launching the Certified Truman Trainer program in October 2017, we have conducted a series of 10 workshops to certify almost 40 members from all over the country and abroad in a variety of trainings. Newly certified trainers have conducted trainings during our 2018 orientation and for allied partners around the country. Our new trainers have been instrumental in securing contracts to train partner organizations.

Our new implicit bias training, Bridging the Gap: Tackling Bias, Stereotypes, and Discrimination in National Security was presented at the Munich Security Conference in February. This training well received and has opened up new partnerships for Truman across the Transatlantic security space. Over the past six months, Truman has continued building new relationships and deepening old ones with organizations interested in our training modules, including New Leaders Council, American Council of Young Political Leaders, Women’s Action for New Direction/Women Legislators Lobby, Indivisible, and the National Democratic Training Committee among others.

**Operation Free**

Thanks to the generous four-year investment from the MacArthur Foundation beginning in January, the Operation Free team spent the first four months of the year working with Chapters in our three target states to conduct a landscape analysis of where Truman’s efforts could have the greatest impact, and to engage with new and current partners around planned initiatives. Looking ahead, Truman will host a veteran’s clean energy roundtable in North Carolina in late June, with additional convenings taking place in Texas and Colorado timed to coincide when the state legislatures are in session.

**Communications**

From January to early May, Truman's communications team assisted in producing, placing, and promoting 637 media hits, which reached an estimated 152 million people and registered a $1.4 million advertising value equivalency. Our four brands (Truman Center, Truman Project, The Whistle Stop, and Operation Free) made more than 1,100 posts via seven platforms, reaching more than 1.5 million people. We also continued our daily and weekly messaging work and did significant earned, placed, and digital work around discrete issues including Mike Pompeo's nomination for Secretary of State, Gina Haspel's nomination for CIA Director, and the United States withdrawal from the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran.

The communications team also constructed the online platform for and executed the rollout of Truman's abovementioned authoritarian indications and warning system, Stop the Slide. During its initial launch week in March, the tool had more than 1,600 unique visitors and over 2,500 page views; through Twitter promotion, it had more than 73,000 impressions, more than 2,000 engagements, and an average engagement rate per tweet of 2.75% (well above our average 1.1%). This activity also resulted in a large boost to our normally steady growth of followers on the Truman Project-branded Twitter account.

**Development**

Truman’s fundraising efforts have gotten off to a great start throughout the first few months of 2018. In fact, we were able to match one for one Bob Abernethy’s generous contribution of $100,000 during the first quarter of the year. By building upon previous relationships, as well as newer partnerships established last year, we’ve been able to grow our network of donors, specifically with regard to our foundations and corporate sponsors.

On the foundation side, we received the first of four installments from our four-year, $1 million MacArthur Foundation grant for energy and climate security programming in early 2018, as well as the final Carnegie Corporation of New York payment from our $500,000 grant for member-based activities. The Sandler Foundation also renewed its $300,000 support in May 2018, and the Compton Foundation recently provided us with a supplemental general support grant of $50,000 to aid in our civic engagement work. Finally, we received $65,000 from the Ploughshares Fund last month as we re-engaged them on our nuclear nonproliferation activities. We are currently in discussion with the David Rockefeller Fund to move forward on additional energy funding, with c3 and c4 components, and are in active negotiation with the MacArthur Foundation for support for our nuclear nonproliferation work. We also anticipate working with Open Society Foundations in the coming months to renew the funding we secured last year.

It is also an exciting time for our growing corporate relations program. Truman has managed to increase our corporate engagement and outreach, and we continue to increase our pool of prospects. We have been successful in identifying and engaging the energy and tech sectors in efforts to diversify and expand our Bay Area and Silicon Valley networks. During the most recent trip to the Bay Area, we were able to secure several meetings with tech executives, and establish solid relationships which will yield long-term partnerships. We have had fruitful conversations and are in the final negotiation stages with Franklin Templeton, Tesla, Facebook, Palantir, Lyft, and Chobani, to name a few. Our team is working tirelessly to secure TruCon18 sponsorships, and would like to thank the generous investments made by members of the Truman Boards.