

**The Graduate Student Assembly
The University of Texas at Austin**

Author(s): Christina Baze, President, GSA

Sponsor(s): Michelle Daniel, Programs Director, GSA
Kathryn Abercrombie, Legislative Affairs Director, GSA

Resolution: G.R. 19 (F) 6 - A Statement in Support of the Student Safety Working Group Addressing University Sexual Misconduct Policies

WHEREAS (1): A student group held an event called “Sit In for Student Safety” on October 25th, 2019¹, in response to two University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) professors, Coleman Hutchison and Sahotra Sarkar, who have been found to be in violation of the sexual misconduct policy, returning to teaching undergraduate courses; and,

WHEREAS (2): The organizers of this student group, along with leaders from Student Government, Senate of College Councils, and Graduate Student Assembly, have subsequently met with the Provost, Dean of Students, Chair of the Faculty Council, and other administrators at UT Austin on November 1st and 15th to discuss issues of transparency in sexual misconduct investigation procedures and communication of sexual misconduct investigation findings; and,

WHEREAS (3): UT Austin administrators are positively responding to these student actions by hiring “a team of outside experts to examine UT’s processes surrounding allegations of sexual misconduct and work to bring further clarity to our procedures,”² building an internal working group “of faculty members, staff members and students — including those who participated in last week’s meeting — to provide internal perspectives and analysis”, and aiming to “double the number of full-time investigators in [the Office for Inclusion and Equity (OIE)], which investigates complaints against faculty and staff members”³; and,

WHEREAS (4): The Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) supports the peaceful and productive efforts of this student group to promote acceptable and fair solutions for this and similar issues in the future, as graduate students are often affected by sexual

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/events/501854460367260/>;
<http://www.dailytexanonline.com/sit-in-maurie-minnis-protest-two-professors-misconduct-student-safety>

² This expert team is now known to be the value-driven law firm Husch Blackwell which will function as the external working group. <https://www.huschblackwell.com/>

³ <https://president.utexas.edu/messages/addressing-sexual-misconduct-at-ut-2019>

misconduct violations by faculty to a large degree, given the close collaborative and collegial relationships formed with faculty; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1): UT Austin administration follows through on their promises by April of 2020, including revisions, as appropriate, to their investigative policies and procedures following expert review and assurances that OIE investigators are properly certified; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (2): The UT Austin administration consider a means of communicating the results of sexual misconduct investigations while maintaining confidentiality and protection for involved parties, such as integrity bulletins⁴, license actions⁵, or other forthcoming student-driven suggestions, as this would mitigate fear and anger by quashing misunderstandings and rumors; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (3): That this resolution be sent to President Gregory Fenves, *President of the University of Texas at Austin*; Dr. Maurie McInnis, *Executive Vice President and Provost*; Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly, *Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*; Student Government; the Senate of College Councils; the *Austin-American Statesman*, and *The Daily Texan*.



Signature of the GSA President (Christina Baze)

Passed by GSA on November 20, 2019

⁴ <https://post.az.gov/integrity-bulletins>

⁵ <https://www.tcole.texas.gov/newsletter>, license actions found within The Briefing documents