

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

Authors: Alexis Fischer, *Member*, Communication Council
Katie Horstman, *Former Academic Policy Committee Co-Chair*, Senate of College Councils
Urub Khawaja, *Policy Chair and Senate Representative*, Communication Council
Mariana Lozano, *Communication Representative*, Student Government
Ian McEntee, *Academic Affairs Policy Co-Director*, Student Government
Julia O’Hanlon, *Member*, Communication Council
Bryten Otting, *Communication Representative*, Student Government

Sponsors: Claire Coronado, *Vice President*, Education Council
Cole Deutch, *U-Wide Representative*, Student Government
Linda Duraj, *Business Representative*, Student Government
Chloe Kersh, *Vice President*, Liberal Arts Council
Jakob Lucas, *Liberal Arts Representative*, Student Government
Yesmeen Moharram, *Fine Arts Representative*, Student Government
Janna Sayfie, *U-Wide Representative*, Student Government
Bailey Sward, *President*, Communication Council
Elena Ivanova, *Vice President*, Senate of College Councils

Resolution: J.R. 18 (F) 5 — Joint Resolution in Support of UT Professors and UT Gun Free Signage

Executive Summary

Summary: In 2016, Texas state senate passed Bill 11, allowing guns onto university campuses. Professors began posting Gun Free UT signs in their windows, which the university asked them to remove. This bill calls for the UT administration to allow for peaceful protest against the Texas senate bill and asks for student representation on the task force that has been set up to address these concerns.

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

Authors: Alexis Fischer, *Member*, Communication Council
Katie Horstman, *Former Academic Policy Committee Co-Chair*, Senate of College Councils
Urub Khawaja, *Policy Chair and Senate Representative*, Communication Council
Mariana Lozano, *Communication Representative*, Student Government
Ian McEntee, *Academic Affairs Policy Co-Director*, Student Government
Julia O’Hanlon, *Member*, Communication Council
Bryten Otting, *Communication Representative*, Student Government

Sponsors: Claire Coronado, *Vice President*, Education Council
Cole Deutch, *U-Wide Representative*, Student Government
Linda Duraj, *Business Representative*, Student Government
Chloe Kersh, *Vice President*, Liberal Arts Council
Jakob Lucas, *Liberal Arts Representative*, Student Government
Yesmeen Moharram, *Fine Arts Representative*, Student Government
Janna Sayfie, *U-Wide Representative*, Student Government
Bailey Sward, *President*, Communication Council
Elena Ivanova, *Vice President*, Senate of College Councils

Resolution: J.R. 18 (F) 5 — Joint Resolution in Support of UT Professors and UT Gun Free Signage

WHEREAS (1): The University of Texas at Austin asked faculty to remove outward facing signs from their office windows by September 7, 2018, which included Gun Free UT signs hung to protest Senate Bill 11 that went into effect August 1, 2016¹; and,

WHEREAS (2): The intent of Gun Free UT is to promote and preserve the welcoming environment and general safety of the University of Texas at Austin campus, and to ensure the public is “Armed with Reason”² and feels empowered to have debate within the classroom and on campus; and,

WHEREAS (3): This silencing of professors’ free speech is government censorship³, which must not be tolerated on our campus; and,

¹ Isenberg, M, and O’Hanlon, M. “Gun free UT signs face removal after University enforces signage policy.” 6 Sept 2018. *The Daily Texan*. <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2018/09/06/gun-free-ut-signs-face-removal-after-university-enforces-signage-policy>

² “Gun Free UT – Pushing Back Against Campus Carry.” 29 Sept 2015. GunFreeUT.org. <http://gunfreeut.org/who-we-are/>

³ “Speech on Campus.” 2018. ACLU.org. <https://www.aclu.org/other/speech-campus>

WHEREAS (4): When faculty and students cannot peacefully dissent, a university ceases to be an engine for progress and change in the world; and,

WHEREAS (5): The required removal of Gun Free UT signage and the silencing of discourse on campus diminishes UT Austin’s status as a Tier 1 research University⁴; and,

WHEREAS (6): The administration should promote policies that engender critical thought and engagement on our campus, and uphold the core values of UT Austin⁵; and,

WHEREAS (7): These intentions demonstrate that Gun Free UT’s mission is protected under Free Speech on campus as defined by the ACLU⁶, and that this dialogue occurring on campus is vital to protect the academic integrity and status of our University; and,

WHEREAS (8): According to English and Women and Gender Studies professor and member of Faculty Council, Dr. Lisa Moore, “students have enormous power on this campus. They are the reason we are all here. Students are our future leaders, and also the future alumni and donors of the University of Texas. Students cannot be fired. Students are energetic, smart, hopeful, and determined to make the world they want to live in”; and,

WHEREAS (9): Students have the ability, and thus the onus to stand up for their professors’ and their own free speech; now,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1): The Senate of College Councils here assembled make the formal recommendation for the University of Texas at Austin administration to reverse its request to take down signs; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (2): There be student representation on the taskforce assembled by President Fenves to investigate and discuss the Gun Free UT signs from both Senate and Student Government; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (3): The Senate of College Councils calls on the administration of the University of Texas at Austin to issue a formal policy that protects the rights of all staff members at UT Austin to express their freedom of speech in their offices and outward facing windows, or define clearly the administration’s outward facing sign policy by the last class day of the Fall semester; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (5): This resolution of the Senate of College Councils be sent to The Daily Texan, The Board of Regents, Mr. James Milliken, *Chancellor of the University of Texas System*; Mr. Gregory Fenves, *President of The*

⁴ “Carnegie Classifications.” Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Accessed 18 Nov 2018. <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/index.php>

⁵ “Mission and Values.” 2018. The University of Texas at Austin. Accessed 18 Nov 2018.

<https://www.utexas.edu/about/mission-and-values>

⁶ Above 3.

University of Texas at Austin; Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students; Dr. Maurie McInnis, Provost of the University of Texas at Austin; Dr. Charlotte Canning, Chair of the Faculty Council; and Dr. Brian Evans, Chair Elect of the Faculty Council.

PASSED by the Graduate Student Assembly, November 28, 2018.

Signature of the GSA President: 