


The Graduate Student Assembly
The University of Texas at Austin

Sponsor: The Bill of Rights and Responsibilities Ad Hoc Committee

Action Taken: Passed

Certified: 

President, Graduate Student Assembly
President, Graduate Student Assembly

Resolution: G.R. 16 (S) 2 - Endorsement of changes to the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

Summary: A resolution passing changes to the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

WHEREAS (1): the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) has charged the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (BoRR) ad hoc committee with “actively pursu[ing] the adoption of this Bill of Rights and Responsibilities”¹; and,

WHEREAS (2): Conversations with faculty advisors have led to the BoRR committee unanimously adopting the following changes to the BoRR; and,

¹ G.R. 15 (S) 1-A, “Endorsement of the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.”

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25 **WHEREAS** (3): the BoRR committee is required to bring any changes to the BoRR before the
26 GSA for approval, as per G.R. 15 (S) 1-A; therefore, let it be

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28 **RESOLVED** (1): The Graduate Student Assembly approves changes to this Graduate Student
29 Bill of Rights and Responsibilities; and, be it further

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31 **RESOLVED** (2): the BoRR committee will continue its charge by pushing for the adoption of
32 this version of the BoRR.

33 **Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities**

34 **(with proposed changes underlined, in blue, and in bold)**

35 I. Right to graduate under requirements specified by the graduate catalog at time of
36 acceptance;¹

37 Responsibility to proactively fulfill program requirements;²

38 II. The right to university commitment to **students achieving** a basic standard of living;³

39 The responsibility to be good stewards of our resources afforded to graduate students;

40 III. Right to periodic reviews of performance pertaining to academic standing and/or
41 employment status;^{3*}

42 Responsibility to act upon feedback and recommendations in order to maintain good
43 standing with the university;

44 IV. Right to grievance processes that **can** include **s**graduate student peers **advocates in**
45 **matters of employment and academics, without fear of reprisal;**^{4*}

*** is defined as where adoption of the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (BoRR) would entail an amendment to current policy**

¹ Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section B.1.c. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005. URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

² **University Catalogs: The University of Texas at Austin, Graduate Catalog 2015-2017: Graduate Study: Student Responsibility.**

URL: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/graduate-study/student-responsibility>

^{3*} **The Milestones Agreement provides a feasible model for a system that could be expanded and implemented university-wide, to be accessible to all graduate students.**

The University of Texas at Austin, Graduate School, Milestones Agreement.

URL: <http://gradschool.utexas.edu/advisers-and-coordinators/milestones-information>

Current Policy: University Catalogs: The University of Texas at Austin, General Information Catalog 2015-2016: Academic Policies and Procedures: Academic Advising

URL: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/>

^{4*} **The BoRR committee suggests an amendment to existing policy such that departmental grievance processes provide an opportunity for graduate student representation, to be determined by each Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).**

Current policy: Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section D. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005.

- 46 Responsibility to voice concerns and participate in grievance process;
- 47 V. Right to nondiscrimination⁵ by the university in academic and employment matters;^{5*6}
- 48 Responsibility to not discriminate against any student, faculty, or staff member;
- 49 VI. Right to be treated respectfully and professionally by university administration and faculty;
- 50 Responsibility to conduct oneself according to the University of Texas Honor Code⁷ and
- 51 represent the University in an appropriate professional manner;
- 52 VII. Right to representation and shared governance of the college and university, along with
- 53 inclusion in formal conversations about policy changes that impact graduate
- 54 students;⁷to foster transparency.⁸
- 55 Responsibility to participate in shared governance.

URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

The BoRR committee also recommends that the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) support the selection and training of graduate student peer advocates who can act as liaisons and provide support to graduate students throughout various grievance processes.

An amendment to this policy such that a grievance procedure includes a Graduate School Grievance Committee with graduate students:

⁵Discrimination refers to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability status, religion, nationality, pregnancy or family status, sexual harassment, and veteran status.

^{5*6}The University of Texas at Austin Catalog, Appendix I: Non-Discrimination Policy.

URL: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-i/>

This policy currently refers to discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, including sexual harassment, age, disability, citizenship, and veteran status, and on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; the BoRR committee proposes adding pregnancy and family status to this list.

⁶⁷Standards of Conduct. The University of Texas at Austin, Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students.

URL: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/conduct.php>

⁷⁸Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section C. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005.

URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

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Appendix A – the BoRR with proposed changes

Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

- I. Right to graduate under requirements specified by the graduate catalog at time of acceptance;¹
Responsibility to proactively fulfill program requirements;²
- II. The right to university commitment to students achieving a basic standard of living;
The responsibility to be good stewards of our resources afforded to graduate students;
- III. Right to periodic reviews of performance pertaining to academic standing and/or employment status;^{3*}
Responsibility to act upon feedback and recommendations in order to maintain good standing with the university;
- IV. Right to transparent grievance processes that can include graduate student peer advocates, without fear of reprisal;^{4*}

* is defined as where adoption of the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (BoRR) would entail an amendment to current policy

¹ Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section B.1.c. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005.
URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

² University Catalogs: The University of Texas at Austin, Graduate Catalog 2015-2017: Graduate Study: Student Responsibility.

URL: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/graduate-study/student-responsibility>

^{3*} The Milestones Agreement provides a feasible model for a system that could be expanded and implemented university-wide, to be accessible to all graduate students.

The University of Texas at Austin, Graduate School, Milestones Agreement.

URL: <http://gradschool.utexas.edu/advisers-and-coordinators/milestones-information>

Current Policy: University Catalogs: The University of Texas at Austin, General Information Catalog 2015-2016: Academic Policies and Procedures: Academic Advising

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^{4*} The BoRR committee suggests an amendment to existing policy such that departmental grievance processes provide an opportunity for graduate student representation, to be determined by each Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).

Current policy: Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section D. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005.

- 69 Responsibility to voice concerns and participate in grievance process;
- 70 V. Right to nondiscrimination by the university in academic and employment matters;^{5*}
- 71 Responsibility to not discriminate against any student, faculty, or staff member;
- 72 VI. Right to be treated respectfully and professionally by university administration and
- 73 faculty;
- 74 Responsibility to conduct oneself according to the University of Texas Honor Code⁶ and
- 75 represent the University in an appropriate professional manner;
- 76 VII. Right to representation in and shared governance of the college and university, along with
- 77 inclusion in formal conversations about policy changes that impact graduate students;⁷
- 78 Responsibility to participate in shared governance.

URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

The BoRR committee also recommends that the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) support the selection and training of graduate student peer advocates who can act as liaisons and provide support to graduate students throughout various grievance processes.

^{5*} The University of Texas at Austin, General Information Catalog, Appendix I: Non-Discrimination Policy.

URL: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-i/>

This policy currently refers to discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, including sexual harassment, age, disability, citizenship, and veteran status, and on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; the BoRR committee proposes adding pregnancy and family status to this list.

⁶ Standards of Conduct. The University of Texas at Austin, Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students.

URL: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/conduct.php>

⁷ Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section C. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005.

URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

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Appendix B - the BoRR as initially passed

Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (as per G.R. 15 (S) 1-A)

- I. Right to graduate under requirements specified by the graduate catalog at time of acceptance.¹
Responsibility to proactively fulfill program requirements;
- II. The right to university commitment to a basic standard of living.
The responsibility to be good stewards of our resources afforded to graduate students;
- III. Right to periodic reviews of performance pertaining to academic standing and/or employment status.
Responsibility to act upon feedback and recommendations in order to maintain good standing with the university;
- IV. Right to a grievance process that includes graduate student peers in matters of employment and academics.²
Responsibility to voice concerns and participate in grievance process;
- V. Right to nondiscrimination³ by the university in academic and employment matters.⁴
Responsibility to not discriminate against any student, faculty, or staff member;
- VI. Right to be treated respectfully and professionally by university administration and faculty;

¹ Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section B.1.c. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005. URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

² An amendment to this policy such that a grievance procedure includes a Graduate School Grievance Committee with *graduate students*: Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section D. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005. URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

³ Discrimination refers to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability status, religion, nationality, pregnancy or family status, sexual harassment, and veteran status.

⁴ The University of Texas at Austin Catalog, Appendix I: Non-Discrimination Policy. URL: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-i/>

96 Responsibility to conduct oneself according to the University of Texas Honor Code⁵ and
97 represent the University in an appropriate professional manner;
98 VII. Right to representation and shared governance of the college and university, to foster
99 transparency.⁶
100 Responsibility to participate in shared governance.

⁵ Standards of Conduct. The University of Texas at Austin, Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students. URL: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/conduct.php>

⁶ Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1240, Section C. The University of Texas at Austin, The Graduate School, Executive Sponsor: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. February 15, 2005. URL: <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>