

**The Graduate Student Assembly**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**Sponsor:** Abhishek Roy, Katharine Batlan, Warner Cook, Matteo Vestrucci, Wills Brown

**Resolution:** G.R. 16 (F) 2 \_ In Opposition to Portions of Capital Metro’s Connections 2025 that Adversely Affect Graduate Students and in Support of the University of Texas at Austin Advocating for Changes to Connections 2025

**WHEREAS (1):** Capital Metro is currently revising their transportation service schedule through the Connections 2025 planning process; and,

**WHEREAS (2):** As graduate students of The University of Texas at Austin, we are an important user group and stakeholder community of Capital Metro services; and,

**WHEREAS (3):** Capital Metro’s proposal directly and disproportionately affects the transit needs of current as well as future graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin; and,

**WHEREAS (4):** Capital Metro’s proposal calls for the elimination of Routes 663 (UT Shuttle Lake Austin), 21, and 22 serving students living in the three UT Graduate Housing Apartments

on West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Lake Austin (Brackenridge, Colorado, and Gateway Apartment complexes); and,

**WHEREAS (5):** Capital Metro’s proposal for alternative options to the eliminated bus lines includes the realignment of Route 18 and would not provide direct access to campus, therefore increasing commuting time significantly, decreasing the accessibility to campus for those with mobility difficulties, and impacting the safety of graduate students asked to walk farther to bus stops at all hours of the day; and,

**WHEREAS (6):** A new graduate student apartment complex is currently being designed and is scheduled to open in Fall 2019, and will be located in the area around the intersection of 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Leona Street in East Campus; and,

**WHEREAS (7):** Capital Metro’s proposal eliminates Route 641 (UT Shuttle East Campus), which will make the future graduate student housing less accessible than currently envisioned and impact the safety of graduate students living in the future housing; and,

**WHEREAS (8):** Graduate students require access to the University of Texas at Austin at various times throughout the day and night, especially including times of off-peak “traditional commuting” hours; and,

**WHEREAS (9):** Capital Metro’s proposed reduction in midday service of Routes 661, 656, and 680 (UT Shuttles Far West, Intramural Fields, and Lakeshore), combined with their proposed removal of Route 19 and realignment of Route 5, would reduce the accessibility of students living in the Far West, Hyde Park, and Lakeshore areas respectively, although these areas will most likely continue to have many graduate students living in them; and,

**WHEREAS (10):** All the above-mentioned routes are used as the primary mode of transportation by a large number of graduate students living in the areas served by these routes; and,

**WHEREAS (11):** The University of Texas has not detailed a plan to remove the UT Apartments (graduate student housing) from the Gateway, Colorado, and Brackenridge locations in the near future; and,

**WHEREAS (12):** Capital Metro has previously set multiple precedents of adversely affecting the graduate student population with service changes; and,

**WHEREAS (13):** It is not transparent whether there might be any other service changes that can further affect graduate students, or when the routes in question above would actually be altered under Capital Metro’s current proposal; and,

**WHEREAS (14):** Capital Metro claims that it “will need the approval of the UT Shuttle Bus Committee before making changes to UT Shuttle service”; and,

**WHEREAS (15):** The comments, complaints, and suggestions of several graduate students of The University of Texas at Austin at the public forums held by Capital Metro have either not been responded to, or did not seem to affect the proposal or planning process in any tangible way; and,

**WHEREAS (16):** In a public blog post during the period of gathering comments and suggestions, Capital Metro has downplayed the concerns of these graduate students and defended its proposal to eliminate Route 663; and,

**WHEREAS (17):** A student-driven petition to Capital Metro requesting that it not eliminate service on Route 663 has garnered 350 signatures as of Sunday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 6PM; now,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1):** The GSA requests the University of Texas at Austin takes steps to ensure that the routes 663, 18, 21, and 22 continue to operate in their current capacity while graduate students continue to reside at the Gateway, Colorado, and Brackenridge apartments; and,

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (2):** The GSA further requests The University of Texas at Austin to ensure that the route 641 serving East Campus and the planned graduate student housing complex at that location is not discontinued without introduction of equal service options to replace it; and,

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (3):** The GSA further requests The University of Texas at Austin to ensure that the service schedule to the areas served by Routes 661, 656, and 680 are not reduced to morning and early evening hours only, and continue to service graduate students commuting to campus at odd hours.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (4):** The GSA will work towards establishing a facilitation mechanism between the GSA and Capital Metro to regularly address the transportation requirements of graduate students at UT Austin.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (5):** The GSA requests the UT Shuttle Bus committee to meet and discuss, at the earliest possible convenience, Capital Metro's Connections 2025 plan and its implications on the student body at large and on graduate students in particular.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT (6):** The GSA sends this piece of legislation to the Director of Parking and Transportation Services, Bobby Stone; the Director of Housing and Food Services, Hemlata Jhaveri; the VP of Student Affairs and Dean of Students,

Soncia Reagins-Lilly; the Dean of Graduate Studies, *ad interim*, Marvin L. Hackert; member of the Customer Satisfaction Advisory Committee of Capital Metro and Associate Professor in the Department of Information, Risk, and Operations Management in McCombs School of Business, Besty Greenberg; the UT Shuttle Bus Committee members; the Associate Vice President for Campus Safety & Security, Bob Harkins; the President of Student Government, Kevin Helgren; the President of Senate of College Councils, Sergio Cavazos; the President and CEO of Capital Metro, Linda S. Watson; the Tenant Advisory Board for UT Apartments, and the Daily Texan.