

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

Authors: Adam Aziz, GSA Administrative Director
Krittika Krishnan, GSA Representative
Alyssa Ashcraft, GSA UMA
Alden Marshall, GSA UMA
Sergio Cavazos, President of The Senate of College Councils

Resolution: J.R. 16 (F) 2 - In Support of The University of Texas at Austin's Policy on
Affirmative Action and Student Diversity

WHEREAS, Affirmative Action is a holistic process that gives equal opportunity to students from historically oppressed and disadvantaged groups¹; and,

WHEREAS, Minority representation has fallen substantially at institutions in which affirmative action has been banned²; and,

WHEREAS, The population of Texas is currently comprised of 43.0% White residents, 38.8% Hispanic residents, 12.5% Black residents, 4.7% Asian residents, 1.0% American Indian residents, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander residents³; and,

WHEREAS, The student population at The University of Texas at Austin is currently comprised of 45.1% White students, 19.5% Hispanic students, 17.2% Asian students, 3.9% Black students, 0.2% American Indian students, and 0.1% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students⁴; and,

WHEREAS, President Fenves asserts that our university must “recognize the benefits that all our students receive when they are part of a truly diverse student body and seek to provide opportunities to Texans of all backgrounds⁴; ” and,

WHEREAS, A core value at The University of Texas at Austin is Individual Opportunity⁵, which is defined as “many options, diverse people and ideas, one university”; and,

¹ http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/06/24/us/affirmative-action-bans.html?_r=0

² <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/billlookup/History.aspx?LegSess=75R&Bill=HB588>

³ <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI125215/48>

⁴ <https://utexas.app.box.com/v/SHB15-16Complete>

⁵ <https://www.utexas.edu/about/mission-and-values>

WHEREAS, “The educational benefits of diversity include, but are not limited to, bringing unique and direct perspectives to the issues and topics discussed and debated in classrooms, promoting cross-racial understanding, breaking down racial and ethnic stereotypes, and creating an environment in which students do not feel like spokespersons for their race⁶;” and,

WHEREAS, The University of Texas, in accordance with the State of Texas HB 588, implemented the Top 10% rule in 1997 in order to pursue a more diverse student body⁷; and,

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court upheld admissions policies similar to the policy used by The University of Texas at Austin in *Grutter v. Bollinger* in 2003⁸; and,

WHEREAS, In June 2016, the Supreme Court upheld the admissions policy of The University of Texas at Austin in the case of *Fisher v. University of Texas*, reaffirming the commitment to make diversity and inclusion central goals of the admissions process⁹; and,

WHEREAS, President Fences has reaffirmed his support of the Supreme Court decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, stating that “the court recognized that this very comprehensive admissions process we use is constitutional, and it is narrowly tailored and recognizes that every student at the University of Texas benefits from getting an education in a diverse environment¹⁰”; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, That The Graduate Student Assembly and The Senate of College Councils at The University of Texas at Austin believe that there is great value for students, faculty, and staff in maintaining a diverse, inclusive student body that reflects the vast identities and backgrounds present in the state of Texas; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, That The Graduate Student Assembly and The Senate of College Councils at The University of Texas at Austin support the university administration’s position on affirmative action designed to maintain diversity as an integral component of the university’s success and the success of its students; and,

BE IT RESOLVED, That The Graduate Student Assembly and The Senate of College Councils at the University of Texas at Austin understand and support the university administration’s position that affirmative action is based on a rationale recognizing the educational benefits of diversity for all students, and that all students stand to benefit from a diverse, inclusive student body; and,

⁶ <https://www.texastribune.org/2015/10/26/ut-supreme-court-we-need-affirmative-action/>

⁷ <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=000&invol=02-241>

⁸ <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/539/306.html>

⁹ <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/06/23/us-supreme-court-rules-fisher-case-involving-ut-au/>

¹⁰ <http://www.npr.org/2016/06/23/483275164/university-of-texas-at-austin-president-reacts-to-affirmative-action-ruling>

BE IT RESOLVED, That The Graduate Student Assembly and The Senate of College Councils understand and support the university administration's position that affirmative action is based on a rationale recognizing the academic potential of students who have historically and disproportionately faced challenges and disparities in access to higher education; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be delivered to the Board of Regents, the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of the President, the Office of Executive Vice President and Provost, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Department of Diversity and Community Engagement, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of Admissions, the Office of the Vice President of Legal Affairs, The Austin American-Statesman, The Texas Tribune, and The Daily Texan.