

In Support of Renewing the Green Fee at The University of Texas at Austin

Introduced by: Elise Worchel (Representative, Department of Integrative Biology)

Action Taken: Passed **Certified:**



President, Graduate Student Assembly

Summary: A bill supporting the renewal of the green fee by a student vote

WHEREAS, The Graduate Student Assembly serves as the official voice of the graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin; and,

WHEREAS, In 2009, HB 3353 *Relating to an environmental service fee at public institutions of higher education*¹ was authored by Representative Elliott Naishtat of House District 49 and was signed into law by the Governor on the 19th of June 2009²; and,

WHEREAS, In Spring 2010, the University of Texas at Austin student body approved the creation of a university green fee with 71.06% of the vote; and,

WHEREAS, The University of Texas at Austin Green Fee Committee is charged with granting funds to projects that improve existing campus infrastructure, as well as environmental improvements related to recycling, energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation, and many other services³; and,

¹ Texas Education Code, Title 3. Higher Education, Subtitle A. Higher Education in General, Chapter 54. Tuition and Fees, Section 54.5041 <<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.54.htm#54.5041>>.

² <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=81R&Bill=HB3353>

³ "Bylaws of the UT-Austin Green Fee Committee." (2011): n. pag. UT-Austin Green Fee Committee. Web. 6 Feb. 2015. <http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/documents/UTAustin_GFC_bylaws.pdf>.

WHEREAS, As of September 2014, 103 grants have been distributed⁴, and,

WHEREAS, Projects funded by the green fee create opportunities for employment, internships and volunteer activities for students furthering their education about sustainability on and off-campus;

WHEREAS, the Green Fee is set to expire without renewal after the fifth academic year in which it was implemented, and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Graduate Student Assembly supports the renewal for the Environmental Service fee, commonly known as the Green Fee; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Graduate Student Assembly further supports the ability for the student body at The University of Texas at Austin campus to vote via a referendum whether to reestablish the fee; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Allowing the renewal for the green fee to be voted on by the student body allows for self-governance to reestablish the fee if it so chooses; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The reestablishment of the green fee would continue to provide students with employment, internships, volunteer, educational and research opportunities related to sustainability at The University of Texas at Austin; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Graduate Student Assembly supports the amendment by the Texas Legislature of the above referenced statute that enables the Environmental Service fee to allow for student determination of extending a green fee and the amendment of such statute to allow funding for environmental sustainability projects in academics, such as research grants and course development awards, and campaigns for educational environmental changes on-campus; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to Mr. William McRaven, Chancellor of The University of Texas System; Mr. Paul L. Foster, Chairman of The University of Texas System Board of Regents; Mr. William Powers, President of The University of Texas at Austin; Mr. Kirk Watson, Texas State Senator for District 14; Mr. Elliott Naishtat, Texas State Representative for District 49 and Dr. Gage Paine, Vice President of Student Affairs.

⁴<http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/documents/2011greenfeeprojectlist.pdf>,
<http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/documents/2012greenfeeprojectlist.pdf>,
<http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/documents/2013greenfeeprojectlist.pdf>