



GRADUATE STUDENT ASSEMBLY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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**Executive Summary**

**A.R. F25-01: In Opposition of the University of Texas at Austin’s elimination of DEI-related offices and programming under SB17**

This resolution voices the opposition of the representatives of the Graduate Student Assembly, through its School of Social Work representative, to the University of Texas at Austin’s policy changes enacted in response to Texas Senate Bill 17 (SB 17). The passage of SB 17 brought forth the prohibiting of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices and activities at public universities in Texas. The implementation of SB 17 at UT has resulted in the closure of DEI-related offices, firing of over 60 faculty and staff whose work was DEI-related, the disbandment of the Division of Campus and Community Engagement, and the closure of the Multicultural Engagement Center. The representatives of the Graduate Student Assembly, and their constituents, believe that these changes undermine the university’s stated commitment to equality, belonging, and inclusive excellence. This resolution affirms that the removal of DEI initiatives negatively impacts marginalized graduate students, staff, and faculty as well as the education of students’ university wide. Furthermore, graduate students have lost employment in Graduate Assistant positions in DEI offices, and the Graduate Student Assembly and Student Government have been forced to get rid of DEI serving committees and spaces. Therefore, this resolution calls upon the University to seek lawful alternatives to uphold support of diverse student populations, create and foster inclusive campus spaces, and protect the equitable learning environment U’T has committed itself to in the past.

**A.R. F25-01**

# In Opposition of the University of Texas at Austin's elimination of DEI-related offices and programming under SB17

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## SECTION 1: INDEPENDENCE FROM UNIVERSITY

- (a) This resolution does not constitute an official, unofficial, formal, or informal position of the University of Texas at Austin. Notwithstanding the presence or absence of any University branding marks, this resolution expresses the position of only:
- (1) the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA); and
  - (2) the bodies and constituents the GSA empowered to represent.
  - (3) The GSA does not purport to speak on the university's behalf, and this resolution may not be construed as an attempt to do so, notwithstanding the University's sponsorship of and providing of resources to this student organization.
  - (4) It is the GSA's intent that this section brings this resolution into compliance with the requirements under Regents' Rule 50203, specifically Section 2.2.

## SECTION 2: RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS,** Per section 1.01 of the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) bylaws, the GSA represents the voice of graduate and professional students at UT Austin and bears responsibility for advocating for academic integrity, campus shared governance, and student involvement in institutional decision-making<sup>1</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** The Graduate Student Assembly's advocacy for academic integrity extends to ensuring that all students have equitable access to educational resources, mentorship, and research opportunities necessary for scholarly success; and,

**WHEREAS,** Per section 3.1 of Rule 10901 of the University of Texas System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents<sup>2</sup>, "success of The University of Texas System is dependent on maintaining the trust and confidence earned from students... through diligence and honorable conduct"; and,

**WHEREAS,** Texas Senate Bill 17, which went into effect on January 1, 2024, prohibits diversity, equity, and inclusion offices and related activities at Texas public institutions of higher education<sup>3</sup>; and,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://utexas.app.box.com/v/GSABylaws-ApprovedFall23>

<sup>2</sup> <https://utsystem.edu/sites/default/files/offices/board-of-regents/rules-regulations/10901.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/88R/billtext/pdf/SB00017I.pdf>

**WHEREAS,** The University of Texas at Austin has since closed its Division of Diversity and Community Engagement offices<sup>4</sup>, DEI Office<sup>5</sup>, Multicultural Engagement Center<sup>6</sup> and removed DEI-related resources, which helped support students of color, first-generation students<sup>7</sup>, LGBTQIA+ students<sup>8</sup>, and students with disabilities. These closures have disrupted student learning environments, research continuity, and mentorship structures that are integral to the University’s academic mission; and,

**WHEREAS,** The removal of DEI offices and programming contradicts the University’s own Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan<sup>9</sup>, released in 2017, and stated mission to “contribute to the advancement of society through research, creative activity, scholarly inquiry and the development of new knowledge”; and,

**WHEREAS,** In compliance with SB17, the McCombs School of Business ended its over 40-year partnership with the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management<sup>10</sup>, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, affecting underrepresented graduate students up to 15% of the MBA Class of 2025; and,

**WHEREAS,** Students in the School of Social Work are trained to recognize harms of systemic inequities and are bound by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics<sup>11</sup> to advocate for inclusive, equitable, and just institutions; and,

**WHEREAS,** The UT System is carrying out audits of gender identity courses to ensure full compliance with SB17, thereby restricting faculty autonomy, limiting curricular diversity, and compromising the academic freedom essential to rigorous scholarly inquiry; and,

**WHEREAS,** Graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin have expressed concerns to the university and the GSA about course closures, the suspension of research grants, and fears of losing their livelihoods and support. The issues have received little to no response from the university; and,

**WHEREAS,** The American Association of University Professors recognizes that ‘efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to the educational missions of colleges and universities,’ reinforcing the academic necessity of inclusive learning environments; and,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://thedailytexan.com/2024/04/02/university-to-close-division-of-campus-and-community-engagement/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cbsaustin.com/news/local/students-left-unsure-about-future-of-ut-as-dei-programs-go-away>

<sup>6</sup> <https://thedailytexan.com/2024/01/18/multicultural-engagement-center-closes-because-of-senate-bill-17/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/local/ut-austin-monarch-program-diversity-equity-inclusion-sb17-dei/269-d270c28f-fdf7-46c0-ad81-47c02db59cd7>

<sup>8</sup> <https://thedailytexan.com/2024/01/15/gender-and-sexuality-center-closes-replaced-by-womens-community-center/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://news.utexas.edu/2017/03/30/diversity-and-inclusion-action-plan-to-be-implemented/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://poetsandquants.com/2025/07/04/dei-the-consortium/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

**WHEREAS,** Course audits, records requests, department closures, and firings have placed significant restrictions on academic freedom<sup>12</sup> at the University of Texas at Austin, and has compromised the integrity and sanctity of the diverse and critical education that has motivated graduate students from around the globe to attend the university and make it ranked as the No. 1 public university in Texas and No. 7 in the country<sup>13</sup>. These restrictions threaten UT Austin's standing as a leading research institution committed to intellectual diversity and critical scholarship. As a result, graduate students are living in fear as research opportunities and funding are continuing to be cut, placing their livelihood on the line; and therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** The University of Texas at Austin Graduate Student Assembly, on behalf of the graduate student body, opposes the University of Texas at Austin's elimination of DEI-related offices and programming under SB17; and therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** The Graduate Student Assembly calls on the University administration to seek lawful action for sustaining student initiatives previously administered through DEI offices, including but not limited to cultural student centers, expanded mental health services, and equity-focused research programs; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The Graduate Student Assembly will collaborate with other student governments, faculty councils, and campus organizations to organize and amplify student concerns; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Daily Texan, the Austin American-Statesman, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Union Board of Directors, the Office of the President of the University of Texas at Austin, the Office of the Dean of the School of Social Work

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<sup>12</sup> <https://thedailytexan.com/2025/10/02/academic-freedom-at-ut-continues-to-decline/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://news.utexas.edu/2025/09/23/ut-ranks-as-no-1-public-university-in-texas-no-7-nationally-in-u-s-news-world-report-rankings/>