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9/23/03

AR 9 In support of the Student Bill of Rights

1 Whereas no university in the University of Texas system has an officially sanctioned
2 Student Bill of Rights;

3 Whereas a joint committee, composed of members of Student Government and the
4 Senate of College Councils, drafted a Student Bill of Rights for the students of the
5 University of Texas at Austin;

6 Whereas the Student Bill of Rights for University of Texas at Austin expounds upon the
7 rules, regulations and privileges already afforded to the students of the University;

8 Whereas no unique right stated in the document was created, rather the intent of the
9 original draft stands as a declaration of existing rights in hopes of preserving those rights
10 afforded to students in the status quo;

11 Whereas, the Student Bill of Rights is recognized as a non-exclusive document, meaning
12 that the inclusion of rights stated in the document are not meant to exclude other rights
13 held by the students at the University of Texas at Austin;

14 Therefore be it resolved that the Student Government of University of Texas at Austin
15 supports the preservation and protection of student rights;

16 Be it further resolved that the Student Government of the University of Texas at Austin
17 supports the intent and wording of the final draft of the Student Bill of Rights of
18 University of Texas at Austin presented before the assembly on this day, Tuesday,
19 September 16th, 2003;

20 Be it further resolved that in order to increase student awareness of the Student Bill of
21 Rights and in order to obtain the endorsement of the student body as a whole, the Student
22 Government will hold a university wide student referendum to ratify the Student Bill of
23 Rights;

24 Be it further resolved that the passing of the university-wide student referendum will
25 sanction the legitimacy of this document on behalf of students of the University of Texas
26 at Austin;

27 Be it further resolved that this referendum will set a precedent by which further
28 amendments to the Student Bill of Rights document will be approved by the Student
29 Body.

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A high quality, highly competitive education for all students is imperative for achievement of the historical aspiration to be one nation of equal citizens, and for the economic growth and productivity of the United States. The University of Texas at Austin exists for the creation of new ideas and the expansion of knowledge in the pursuit of particular truths, with the goal of enhancing the well being of society. The University of Texas at Austin community adamantly upholds the values of learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, opportunity and responsibility. To ensure these values are evident everyday on campus and in the community and to realize the core purpose of the University, “[T]o transform lives for the benefit of society,”¹ certain inviolable rights must exist. The University community hereby declares these student rights to guarantee their permanence thus enabling the University to “achieve excellence in the interrelated areas of undergraduate education, graduate education, research and public service.”²

These student rights include those enumerated herein, along with every right afforded by state and federal law, and rules and regulations set forth by the University of Texas at Austin. No rule, regulation, or administrative policy shall be promulgated which prohibits or infringes upon these rights, nor shall the University in any way deny them.

We the students, as members of the University of Texas at Austin community, have the responsibility to uphold the core values of The University of Texas at Austin through honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility towards ourselves, our peers, and our community. We expect all members of the University of Texas at Austin community to maintain a high degree of character in observing and adhering to university rules and regulations. We also have the responsibility to inform ourselves about the rules and regulations of the University of Texas at Austin and to avoid causing any disruption that detracts from the opportunities of other members of the university community.

Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression:

Students and registered student organizations have the right to freely examine and exchange diverse ideas throughout the University campus, provided they not infringe on the rights of fellow members of the University community nor disrupt the regular and essential operations of the University. The University shall not infringe upon any student’s or student organization’s right to freedom of speech.

Right to a Nondiscriminatory Environment:

Students have the right to not be unlawfully discriminated against or harassed on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation. Students have the right to fair and equal evaluation in determination of grades and advancement to degree candidacy. Since student organizations represent the University, membership shall be on a nonexclusive basis except as allowed under federal law.

¹ The University of Texas at Austin Core Purpose

² University of Texas mission statement

Right to Facilities and Resources:

Registered students and student organizations have the right to equal access and use of University facilities and resources, except in instances in which academic and administrative units have priority provided a student or student organization is in accord with the rules and regulations set forth by the University of Texas at Austin³. Properly completed applications for reservation of room or space on University property are to be considered without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, gender, or sexual orientation.

Right to Substantial Input into the Determination of University Policy:

Students have the right to access administrative personnel, faculty, staff, or departments and to receive prompt and courteous responses. Students have the right to be informed of administrative, faculty, staff, and department meetings in a manner that allows student access. As integral members of the University community, students and registered student organizations, have the right to an active and representative role in the making of University policy and procedure.

Right to an Ethical Academic Environment

Students have the right to an academic environment that upholds the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility, ~~as provided for by the honor pledge of the University~~. Students have the right to decline assignments in both academic and research settings, on ethical grounds, but are not excused from the academic consequences of their actions. Professors are encouraged, but not required, to provide alternate assignments.

Right to Freedom of the Press

All broadcasting, film, and print have the right to be free from administrative influence except for the withholding of material from publication⁴. The role of student media is to promote the creation of ideas and knowledge by exposing the student body to diverse views. Students have the right to appeal such withholdings and students should direct the appeal to the Review Committee of the Board of Operating Trustees.

Right to Information

Students have the right to access information in compliance with the Students-Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act regarding campus crime statistics, security policies, institutional completion or graduation rates, and fee allocations. In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, The University shall provide records requested by students and shall make reasonable efforts to maintain its records in a reproducible format.

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Right to Fair Conditions of Employment

Student employees of the University have the right to be treated as both students and employees in determination of benefits, scheduling, and other elements of employment. In accordance with the quantity of work rule⁵, student employees' combined employment and courseload may not exceed 40 hours per week.

³ University of Texas Institutional Rules, Section 10-201a.

⁴ University of Texas at Austin Handbook of Operating Procedures, Section 4.09.

⁵ University of Texas at Austin Handbook of Operating Procedures, Sec 7.10.

Right to Confidentiality and Protection of Student Records:

Students have the right to protection from disclosure of their academic and disciplinary records without legal compulsion or written authorization, as provided for by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and other federal and state laws. Students have the right to be informed in advance when requests are made for their records, unless disclosure of the request is prohibited by legal institutions. No record will be kept that reflects a student's political attitudes, beliefs, or activities⁶ Students have the right to challenge the contents of their educational records on the ground that the record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student⁷.

Right of Due Process:

Students have the right to due process in all disciplinary proceedings: to be informed of charges in a timely manner, to a private hearing, to appear in person and to have counsel at the hearing, to challenge the person designated to hear the charges, to know the identity of each witness who will testify, to present testimony of witnesses and other evidence, to have access to all evidence prior to the hearing in a timely manner, to cross-examine each witness who testifies, and to appeal⁸. Institutional penalties shall not be used to duplicate the penalties imposed by local, state, and federal authorities⁹. In accordance with federal and state law and the rules and regulations of the University of Texas at Austin, the Office of the Dean of Students exclusively shall have the power to expel any student for disciplinary reasons. The termination of graduate students who fail to meet the academic standards established by the graduate program and the Graduate School must be in accord with the policies, procedures, and regulations contained in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures, The Graduate Catalog, and General Information*. Recommendations of the Graduate Studies Committee/Graduate Adviser for termination for academic reasons or failure to make satisfactory progress toward the degree should be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for final action by the Graduate Dean.¹⁰

Amendments to this document must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting in a student referendum.

⁶ University of Texas Institutional Rules and Regulations, Section 9-103.0

⁷ University of Texas Institutional Rules and Regulations, Section 9-202.5.

⁸ University of Texas Institutional Rules and Regulations, Section 11-403c(2)A-H.

⁹ University of Texas Institutional Rules and Regulations, Section 11-101a

¹⁰ University of Texas Graduate School Policy Manual.