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**University of Texas at Austin
Student Government**

AR 13

TITLE: In Support of UT Families and Graduate Student Housing

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Section I. Strategic Planning for Future Longhorns

Whereas it is The University of Texas at Austin's mission to provide "superior and comprehensive educational opportunities at the baccalaureate through doctoral and special professional educational levels;" (1)

Whereas in July 2006, The University of Texas Board of Regents convened the Brackenridge Tract Task Force with the purpose of making recommendations concerning the future of the Brackenridge Tract; (2)

Whereas the membership of the Brackenridge Tract Task Force included University administrators, lawyers, CEO's and real estate developers, and it did not include any students or faculty members; (3)

Whereas the Brackenridge Tract Task Force submitted its report on October 12, 2007, and it recommends the University to engage in a comprehensive master planning process of the Tract, that seeks input from the different stakeholders; (4)

Section II. Housing and Food Services at The University of Texas at Austin

Whereas the Division of Housing and Food Service (DHFS), which is housed within the Division of Student Affairs, oversees all University residential facilities, including the University Apartments; (5)

Whereas the vision of DHFS seeks "to produce a comprehensive out of classroom learning experience that will foster life-long connections;" (6)

Whereas according to DHFS, studies indicate that emphasis upon a student's first-year experience (including students entering professional and graduate schools) results in higher retention, improved academic success and increased graduation rates; (7)

Whereas DHFS is committed to assuring "adequate funding of our programs and facilities – both existing and anticipated;" (8)

Whereas DHFS operates the University Apartments, which is the only University of Texas at Austin housing facility that serves students who have spouses and/or children; (9)

Whereas the University Apartments, which are reserved for graduate students and undergraduates with at least 30 hours credit, include the Brackenridge Apartments (315 units) and the Colorado Apartments (200 units), which are located on the Brackenridge Tract, as well as the Gateway Apartments (200 units), which are located near the Brackenridge Tract; (10)

Section III. Demographics of The University Apartments

Whereas approximately 70% of the student residents of the University Apartments are married, and 40% have children; (11)

Whereas 72% of the current residents in Brackenridge and Colorado Apartments are Ph.D. students, 17% are MS/MA students, 10% are undergraduate students and 1% are law students; (12)

Whereas the law and graduate students account for 25.4% of the student population at the University of Texas, yet they account for only 8% of the student population receiving housing services through the University; (13)

Whereas the University Apartments serve the international student population; (14)

Section IV. Family Housing at UT's Official Comparison Schools

Whereas 100% of the official comparison schools of The University of Texas at Austin provide housing specifically designated for married students and for students who have children; (15)

Whereas the University of California at Berkeley, UCLA, the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Michigan State University, The Ohio State University and the University of Wisconsin (63% of our official comparison schools) provide on-site childcare programs at their family housing facilities; (16)

Section V. Graduate Student Housing at UT's Official Comparison Schools

Whereas 100% of the official comparison schools of The University of Texas at Austin provide housing specifically designated for graduate students; (17)

Whereas 81% of The University of Texas at Austin's comparison schools provide dormitory halls and/or apartment complexes specifically for single graduate and professional students who do not have children; (18)

Whereas none (0%) of the University's official comparison schools provide financial compensation as a replacement for the actual availability of student housing; (19)

Section I. The UT Brand -- "What Starts Here Changes the World"

Whereas according to the Office of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, the University's brand message, "What Starts Here Changes the World" arose from "the need to move beyond our reputation as a leading state institution was the motivator for the university to look closer at the way in which we communicated with constituents. In order to be better understood on a national level, the university needed to send consistent messages to its audiences. By informing its faculty, staff and students about the brand, the university hopes to better express its value to a national audience;" (20)

Whereas the mission of the Office of Relationship Management and University Events, which is housed under the Office of Public Affairs, "is to create, develop and sustain initiatives that convey symbolically the core purpose and values of The University of Texas at Austin;" (21)

Whereas the Office of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin builds public understanding of and support for The University through public relations events designed to enrich the experiences of the children of faculty, staff, and students; (22)

Whereas each year the Office of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin hosts events for UT families, which include Longhorn Halloween (a fun and safe Halloween program for the children of UT employees and students) and the Orange Santa Holiday Program (a program that provides the children of UT employees and students with Christmas gifts); (23)

Whereas Orange Santa is "designed to foster a more caring campus environment by providing help for members of the university community who have special needs during the holiday season... Orange Santa provides a resource for current UT employees and students with special needs but it also serves as an opportunity for the larger university community to contribute to those needs and participate in a special season of caring on campus;" (24)

Section VII. Recruitment: Ensuring a Top Quality Study Body at The University of Texas

Whereas According to President Powers: "To be the very best public university in the country we also need the very best graduate students;" (25)

Whereas it is strategically important to the University to remain competitive with our official comparison schools in recruiting top quality undergraduate and graduate students;

Whereas it is common for prospective graduate students to have spouses and/or children;

Whereas offering graduate and family housing services assists the University in its efforts to recruit graduate students, specifically Ph.D. students with families and international students;

Section VIII. Fostering Retention Via Comprehensive Learning Experiences & Lifelong Connections

Whereas the University Apartments provide affordable housing as well as strong community life and a support network for undergraduate and graduate students who have families, which include interaction with colleagues and the ability to participate in student life activities that are vital to the quality of the student experience;

Whereas The University of Texas Apartment Advisory Board provides residents of the University Apartments with a resource fair on National Night Out in early August that offers useful information regarding community and university services; such as the Austin Library, Family Connections, Austin Child Guidance, People's Community Health Clinic, UT Family and Community Programs and the PALS conversation partners program; (26)

Whereas The University of Texas Apartment Advisory Board offers residents of the University Apartments with a Mom's group that "meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at the Gateway Community Center or other locations. Toys are provided and others have a chance to meet each other and talk while the children are playing;" (27)

Whereas the non-profit organization Literacy Austin provides adult residents of the University Apartments with classes in English as a Second Language; (28)

Whereas the current location of the University Apartments enables elementary school age children to attend Mathews Elementary School, which has developed successful programs that respond to the specific needs of the children of UT students, including programs for Chinese, Korean and Spanish speaking children; (29)

Whereas Mathews Elementary School provides invaluable community resources for the whole family through programs such as *Computer Key Boarding Classes*, a *Community Library Program*, a *Community Arts Project*, *KLRU/Kindergarten Family Reading Workshop*, *Celebrating 6th Grade* for incoming 6th Graders and an *English Conversation Adult Class*; (30)

Whereas Mathews Elementary School provides a diverse and inclusive educational experience for the children of students through programs like the *Geography Bee/International Festival*, Asian, African American, and Hispanic Heritage Months celebrations, *African American Heritage Writing Contest*, a *Winter Musical*, after-school classes in Spanish and Chinese for Non-native speakers, a *Matthews' Anthology* (featuring every student's best work) and a *Seeing Special Things Program* with the Austin Museum of Fine Arts; (31)

Therefore be it resolved that the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin believes it is strategically essential that the University offer graduate student and family housing, which includes undergraduates, in order to ensure the successful recruitment and retention of top quality students; *seriously amendment to strike*

Be it further resolved that the Student Government believes that providing graduate student and family housing serves the educational mission of the University of Texas at Austin, and helps with the recruitment of top quality students from the United States and around the world;

Be it further resolved that financial assistance does not function as a realistic substitute for the sense of community and support networks provided by family housing, and therefore the Student Government advises against the possibility of implementing a housing financial assistance program in lieu of providing actual housing for students and their families;

Be it further resolved that the Student Government requests that the University Apartments not be moved from their present location at the Brackenridge Tract;

Be it further resolved that the Student Government requests that the university administration ensure the representation of students who reside at the University Apartments on all university standing or ad hoc committees dealing with housing policies, including the development of the master plan for the Brackenridge Tract;

Be it further resolved that an official copy of this resolution be printed and distributed to the Director of Housing and Food Service, the Dean of Students, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President of the University, the members of the Brackenridge Tract Task Force and the Board of Regents.

Comments

(1) The following was taken from

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/index.php?site=0&scode=0&id=281&menu=70>.

The Division of Housing and Food Service states: "Our vision, mission and values support the following Initiatives that are embraced by the Division of Student Affairs:

FOCUS ON STUDENTS' FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE. Numerous studies indicate that emphasis upon a student's first-year experience results in higher retention, improved academic success, and increased graduation rates. The University has, in recent years, initiated a number of programs aimed at improving the freshman year experience. That initiative should be expanded to include the first-year experience of all students, including transfer students and those entering professional and graduate schools.

INCREASE EFFORTS TO BUILD A SECURE AND INCLUSIVE CAMPUS COMMUNITY. While the responsibility for creating campus community will continue to be shared throughout the University, Student Affairs has a primary role to play in this area. A secure and inclusive community will assist in socially integrating new members, and will contribute to greater involvement, understanding and acceptance.

EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS' LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.

Student Affairs serves a major role in creating opportunities for students to experience self-discovery, self-development, and to learn the elements of leadership. The challenge now exists to expand the definition of leadership beyond positional to transformational, where all students uncover and develop their own potential.

FOCUS ON AN ENHANCED CAMPUS-WIDE CULTURE OF WELLNESS. The attitudes and behaviors students acquire at the University have the potential to become lifelong habits. By promoting a culture of wellness, Student Affairs has the opportunity to extend its influence far beyond a student's tenure at the University.

ASSESS AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO OUR STUDENTS. The Division needs data to better understand whom we are serving, how effectively we are serving them, and how we can improve. To accomplish this we need to initiate and develop a comprehensive division-wide assessment program. With this information, Student Affairs can improve services and clearly document our collective story in a more detailed manner.

STRENGTHEN THE IDENTITY OF STUDENT AFFAIRS. Recognizing that Student Affairs is comprised of a variety of individuals and units, the Division remains unified in its commitment to student and staff learning and development. To be effective in our mission, the Division must strengthen the identity of Student Affairs while creating new opportunities for collaboration and promoting professional growth.

ASSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES. The advent of flat-rate tuition and recent escalation of utility costs have illustrated the important need to assure adequate funding of our programs and facilities – both existing and anticipated. Rigorous planning, stewardship and fiscal responsibility will continue to be crucial."

Footnotes

(1) <http://www.utexas.edu/welcome/mission.html>

(2) Task Force members include: Mr. Larry E. Temple -- Committee Chair (Lawyer, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission), Dr. Pat L. Club* (Vice-President of Employee & Campus Services at UT-Austin), Mr. Frank W. Denius (Lawyer, Chairman of the UT-Austin Athletics Veterans Committee), Mr. Jesus Garza (Former Austin City Manager, COO of Seton Family of Hospitals and President and CEO of Brackenridge Hospital), Ms. Dealey D. Herndon (President of Herndon, Stauch & Associates, Member of Board of Directors for BELO Corporation), Mr. Kevin P. Hegarty (Chief Financial Officer for UT-Austin), Dr. Scott C. Kelley (Executive Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs at the UT System), Mr. Tom Meredith (CEO of MFI Capital, Adjunct Professor McCombs School of Business), Mr. C. Patrick Oles, Jr. (President & CEO of Barshop & Oles Co., Regent under Gov. Bill Clements), Ambassador Pamela P. Willeford (Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Chairman of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)

(3) <http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/files/brackTract/report.pdf>

(4) <http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/files/brackTract/report.pdf>

(5) <http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/index.php?site=0&scode=0&id=280&menu=70>

(6) <http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/index.php?site=0&scode=0&id=281&menu=70>

(7) <http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/index.php?site=0&scode=0&id=281&menu=70>

(8) <http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/index.php?site=0&scode=0&id=281&menu=70>

- (9) http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/index.php?site=0&scode=2&id=639&is_main=1
- (10) Data provided by the University Apartments Office (October, 2007)
- (11) Data provided by the University Apartments Office (October, 2007)
- (12) Data provided by the University Apartments Office (October, 2007)
- (13) http://www.utexas.edu/academic/oir/statistical_handbook/06-07/
- (14) Data provided by the University Apartments Office (October, 2007)
- (15) The official comparison schools of The University of Texas at Austin are as follows:
UCLA, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Michigan, Michigan State, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Ohio State University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Washington, Indiana University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- (16) These schools include: UC Berkeley, UCLA, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Ohio State University, and the University of Wisconsin
<http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/livingatcal/universityvillage.html>,
<http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/child/index.html>,
<http://map.ais.ucla.edu/portal/site/UCLA/menuitem.789d0eb6c76e7ef0d66b02ddf848344a/?vgnextoid=7023064a9a7d1010VgnVCM1000008f8443a4RCRD>,
<http://www.housing.umich.edu/northwood/index.html>,
<http://www.housing.umn.edu/student/family/como.shtml>,
<http://www.housing.umn.edu/student/family/commonwealth.shtml>,
<http://buckeyevillage.osu.edu/community.asp>,
<http://www.housing.wisc.edu/universityapartments/childcare.html>
- (17) See footnote 15.
- (18) <http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/life/housing.shtml>,
<http://map.ais.ucla.edu/portal/site/UCLA/menuitem.3f8e7342ad4ca217b66d4ab4f848344a/?vgnextoid=542386a201c12010VgnVCM1000008f8443a4RCRD>,
<http://www.housing.umich.edu/northwood/index.html>,
http://housing.unc.edu/get_room/conTracting/index.html,
<http://www.hfs.msu.edu/uH/students/graduate.html>,
<http://housing.osu.edu/halls.asp?section=gradpro&id=11&type=41>,
<http://housing.osu.edu/halls.asp?section=gradpro&id=28&type=41>,
<http://www.housing.wisc.edu/universityapartments/harvey/>
- (19) See footnote 15.
- (20) <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/utbrand/conclusion.html>
- (21) <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/ormue/index.php?e=0,20>
- (22) <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/about/index.php?e=0,1,20>
- (23) <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/ormue/events.php?e=0,1,20>
- (24) <http://www.utexas.edu/events/orangesanta/index.html>
- (25) <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/news/2006/09/powers29.html>
- (26) <http://www.utaab.org/>
- (27) <http://www.utaab.org/>
- (28) <http://www.utaab.org/>
- (29) <http://www.austinisd.org/schools/website.phtml?id=081>
- (30) <http://www.austinisd.org/schools/website.phtml?id=081>
- (31) <http://www.austinisd.org/schools/website.phtml?id=081>