



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Unanimous Consent in Student Government on 10/13/2020 in The Senate of College Councils on _____
• _____ in Graduate Student Assembly on _____

J.R. 20-02

A Joint Resolution in Support of The Addition of an X Gender Marker in the UT System

between

Student Government, Senate of College Councils, and Graduate Student Assembly

Executive Summary

There is a need for non-binary and intersex students, staff, and faculty at UT to be recognized and respected. In a group of surveyed students, many reflected that "non-binary and transgender students and faculty deserve the same rights to feel safe and welcomed on this campus"¹. The addition of an X gender marker to the Registrar's identification information system is a step towards recognizing the non-binary and intersex folks at UT while also affecting the most amount of databases at UT Austin. The ability for a UT affiliate to change their gender marker to M, F, or X should be available as an extension of the Gender and Sexuality Center's current UT Name Change service.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the difference between sex and gender identity?

A: Sex relates to someone's biological or physical traits; society has defined two sexes (male and female) but there are many folks who are intersex, or someone whose sex do not fit neatly into society's categories. Gender is a social construct. Gender identity is someone's personal sense of what their gender is and does not have to be related to sex in any way.

Q: What does "non-binary" mean?

A: Non-binary is an umbrella term that encompasses folks whose gender identities do not fall strictly in line with only "man" or "woman".

Q: Why would this legislation have a meaningful impact on non-binary folks affiliated with UT?

A: This is much more than just another letter in a system. A UT student has reflected: "I'm not a woman, and I'm not a man, so with only 'M' and 'F' to choose from, I cannot have my gender reflected accurately."¹ UT would be practicing trans allyship with this change.

Q: What is the scope of this change?

A: Since the Registrar's database will be impacted, most databases within UT Austin will be affected. The admissions office and their data will NOT be impacted. Thus, students and staff will be able to change their gender marker only once they are in the UT Austin system.

Q: What is the Name and Gender Marker Change service at UT Austin?

A: These are actually 2 different services. The Gender and Sexuality Center can guide any UT affiliate to change their name (in the Registrar's system) WITHOUT a legal name

¹ [Testimony from a survey of UT students relating to this policy](#)



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change. As of now, a gender marker change can be requested only by sending a letter directly to the Registrar's Office.

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Authors: Nova-Rose Brown (they/them); Isaac James (he/him), *Vice President, Senate of College Councils*; Kendall Hagmann (she/her), *Natural Sciences Council and UT Alumni*

Sponsors: Aashna Lal (she/her), *Outreach Coordinator, Natural Sciences Council*; Adrian Tinoco (he/him and xe/xim), *Student Leadership Committee Active Member*; Adrian Pedroza (she/her), *President, LGBTQ+ Engineers*; Aevi van der Stok (they/them and ze/zem), *Co-Organizer, embrACE*; Aiden Aguirre (he/him); Alessandra Garcia-Fuentes (she/her); Alexander Roland (he/him), *Officer, Queer Business Student Association*; Alice Reuter (they/them); Alyssa Perales (they/them and she/her), *Active Member, Women in Gaming*; Amanda Helms (she/her), *Secretary, Council of Graduate Chemists*; Amber Taylor (they/them and she/her); Amie Nguyen (she/her), *Women's Case Competition Chair, Undergraduate Business Council*; Andrea Vigil (she/her), *Officer, LGBTQ+Ties*; Andres Najera (he/him); Andrew Smith (he/him); Anika Tarasewicz (she/her), *Advisor, Canadian Women in Chemical Sciences, Engineering, and Technology*; Ann Chen (they/them); Arianna Anchondo (she/her), *Active Member, LGBTQ Engineers*; Aspen Mixon (they/them), *Secretary, LGBTQ+ Engineers*; Audrey Bustillo (she/her); Bernardo Burboa Quiroga (she/her); Brendan Kim (he/him); Caitlyn Cobb (she/her); Caitlyn Harris (she/her), *Active Member, Women in Engineering*; Camila Bohorquez (she/her); Cassandra Prince (she/her); Catherine Monteleone (she/her), *Administrative Director, Undergraduate Business Council*; Christina Baze (she/her), *Internal Policy Director, Graduate Student Assembly*; Christina Negrete-Montero (they/them and she/her), *Active Member, Gender Minorities in Physics*; Christopher Karouta (he/him), *Treasurer, Texas Theta Tau*; Claire Levinson (she/her), *President, Queer Business Student Association*; Corrine Cassel (she/her); David Garcia (he/him), *Student Government Liaison, Queer and Trans Student Alliance*; Dhruva Karkada (he/him); Eddith Figueroa (she/her), *Active Member, Q++*; Eisha Rao (she/her), *Public Relations Chair, Natural Sciences Council*; Elijah Stroud (he/him); Elisa Aubrun (she/her); Elizabeth Robinson (she/her); Emma Lea Wall (she/her), *Active Member, Undergraduate Business Council*; Giselle Nevarez (she/her); Harrison Ward (they/them and he/him), *Social Event Coordinator, Longhorn Tabletop Gaymers*; Hayley Bishop (they/them and she/her), *Active Member, Chemical Engineering Undergraduate Advisory Board*; Henry Aguilar (he/him); Hunter Bergfeld (they/them and he/him), *Financial Director, QTS4*; Jacks Pino (he/him and they/them), *Active Member, Queer and Trans People of Color Association*; Jeffrey Jabs (they/them), *Active Member, LGBTQ+ Engineers*; Jei Lopez (they/them and she/her), *Active Member, Queer and Trans Student Alliance*; Jessie Pan (she/her), *Active Member, HangOut!*; Jinjie Xu (they/them), *President, HangOut!*; Joe Shirley (he/him); John Scholl (he/him), *Active Member, Texas Blazers*; Justin Chasse (he/him), *Financial Director, Queer and Trans Student Alliance*; Kai Bovik (they/them and he/him), *Active Member, Queer and Trans Student Alliance*; Karen Yang (she/her), *Active Member, Texas Spirits*; Karla Galaviz (she/her), *Events Committee, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers*; Kolby Killion (he/him); Lisa Dillard (she/her), *Active Member, EmbrACE*; Ellie Villegas (she/her), *President, University Filmmakers Alliance*; Maria Orozco (she/her); Maria Dalton (she/her); Matthew Scarborough (they/them and he/him and she/her), *Webmasters, oSTEM at UT Austin*; Maya Rigley (she/her); Mayura Raja (she/her), *Officer, EmbrACE*; Micah Chow (he/him); Morgan Neighbors (they/them and he/him); Morgan Rose (they/them); Neo Molina (he/him); Preethi Kannan (she/her), *Diversity and Inclusion Chair, Natural Sciences Council*; Rachel Luomala (she/her); Rachel Thornton (she/her), *Active Member, Students Against Cruelty to Animals*; Reginald McCoy (they/them); Renee Lahav (they/them and he/him and she/her), *Organizer, Chronically Queer*; Rhea Saini (she/her), *Officer, Women in Business Association*; Ria Upreti (she/her), *Advancement Chair, Society of Women Engineers*; Ricardo Flores III (they/them); Riley Anderson (she/her); Riya Shah (she/her), *Active Member, Undergraduate Business Council*; Sara Felix (they/them), *Facilitator, EmbrACE*; Sebastian Best (he/him); Serina



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Rock (they/them), *Active Member, EmbrACE*; Shayan Panjwani (he/him); Shelby Gammon (she/her); Sophia Gray (they/them), *Outreach Coordinator, University Orchestra Student Association*; Sophie Van Dijke (she/her), *Catalyst Editor-in-Chief*; Usmaan Hasan (he/him), *President, Undergraduate Business Council*; Valkyrie Wasson (she/her); Vanessa Aguirre (they/them and she/her), *Active Member, EmbrACE*; Zachary Lopez (he/him); Zoe de Beurs (she/her), *Officer, Natural Sciences Council*; Queer Business Student Association; Engineering LGBTQies, HangOut!, Rep. Lorren Cantu (she/her), *College of Natural Sciences*; Rep. Jennifer Lee (she/her), *College of Architecture*; Rep. Jaime Gutierrez (he/him), *Transfer*; Speaker Kerry Mackenzie (she/her), *University-Wide*.

WHEREAS, The UT Diversity Statement expresses that the university is “dedicated to attracting highly-qualified students, faculty, and staff of all... gender identities and expressions”²; and,

WHEREAS, As it stands “the Registrar only offers F and M as gender markers”³, both legally and through the gender marker change process at UT; and,

WHEREAS, Student testimony reveals the following: “Whenever I see a ‘select your gender’ blank with only M and F, it reminds me that the system doesn’t see me”⁴; and,

WHEREAS, Student sentiment has reflected that “Non-binary people won’t stop existing because there is no X gender marker, but having their identities affirmed and recognized on university documents could be validating and even life-saving for many”⁴; and,

WHEREAS, “Currently the housing portal sets you to [assigned gender at birth] ONLY by default and cannot be changed, both causing dysphoria for trans people accessing the portal and forcing you to only room with members of your assigned gender at birth”⁴; and,

² [New UT Diversity Statement](#)

³ [Changing Gender Markers section of “Resources for Transgender Students” document](#)

⁴ [Testimony from a survey of UT students relating to this policy](#)



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WHEREAS, A UT student expressed that “intersex individuals struggle their entire lives to assimilate themselves with either male or female gender norms when in reality, their bodies... align with neither”⁴ and their existence and experiences should not be erased in systems; and,

WHEREAS, 10 countries have passed legislation that allows citizens to change their gender marker to an X⁵, so international students from those countries could have legal identification that could not be entered in the UT system; and,

WHEREAS, 18 American states already allow their citizens to change their gender marker to an X on state-issued identification⁶, and as of August 2019 “at least 7,251 gender X IDs and driver's licenses have been issued in nine states plus Washington, D.C.”⁷, which presents a potential issue for out-of-state students who may have already changed their gender marker legally before coming to UT; and,

WHEREAS, Other higher education institutions have implemented a university-recognized third gender marker (or allowed for student self-disclosure of gender), including University of Minnesota⁸, University of California: Los Angeles⁹, University of California: Berkeley¹⁰, Northwestern University¹¹, and Yale University¹²; and,

WHEREAS, The ideal option for changing how UT Austin processes gender is to place a fill-in-the-blank field for gender, this addition to the current binary system is

⁵ [Countries that Have X Gender Markers](#)

⁶ [Legal Recognition of Non-Binary Gender in the U.S.](#)

⁷ [USA Today got this statistic from various state departments](#)

⁸ [University of Minnesota Gender identity self-disclose](#)

⁹ [UCLA allows students to change their gender marker at any time on their web portal](#)

¹⁰ [Legislation from the Office of the Chancellor at UC Berkeley](#)

¹¹ [Northwestern University allows for an “unknown” gender which is technically a third option](#)

¹² [Statement from the Registrar at Yale University](#)



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a compromise borne from the desire to implement quickly under current databases;
and, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, The UT Senate of College Councils, UT Student Government, and
the UT Graduate Student Assembly recommend that the registrar add an X gender
marker to their student identification database; therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, Students, staff, and faculty will be able to change their gender marker
without a legal gender marker change; therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, UT affiliates will be able to change their gender marker via an
amended version of the current Name Change system that the Gender and Sexuality
Center offers, or at the very least through a straightforward letter to the Registrar as
is currently outlined¹³¹; therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, All databases that utilize Advisor's Toolkit data will reflect this
change upon implementation; therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that this joint resolution between Student Government, The Senate
of College Councils, and Graduate Student Assembly be sent to Mr. Mark Simpson,
University Registrar; Dr. Jay Hartzell, *Interim President of the University of Texas at Austin*;
Dr. Daniel Jaffe, *Interim Executive Vice-President and Provost*; Ms. Rachelle Hernandez,
Senior Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Student Success, Dr. Kristin Harvey,
Chair, Faculty Council Education Policy Committee; Dr. Leonard Moore, *Vice-President of
Diversity and Community Engagement*; Dr. Edmund Gordon, *Vice-Provost for Diversity*;
Elizabeth Donihoo, *Assistant to Vice Provost Dr. Edmund T. Gordon*; Mr. Graham

¹³¹¹ [Gender and Sexuality Center Handout on this name-in-use/gender marker change for different types of UT affiliates](#)



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Chapman, *Executive Director of Academic Information Systems*; Liz Elsen, *Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center*; KB, *Program Coordinator at the Gender and Sexuality Center*; Brenda Schumann, *Director of Records and Registration and Deputy University Registrar*; Bethany D. Bell, *Assistant Registrar*; Emily Caldwell, *The Daily Texan Editor in Chief*; John Bridges, *the Austin American Statesman* therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that the implementation of this joint resolution will be led by The Senate of College Councils.