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9/15/87

S.B. 11 STUDENT ISSUES GROUP

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT

ESTABLISHING A STUDENT ISSUES GROUP UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CITIZENS' AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.

Be It Enacted by The Student Senate of The University of Texas:

SECTION I: CREATION OF GROUP. Title II, Chapter 9 of the Students' Association Code is amended by adding the following sections:

"902. The Student Issues Group is headed by two co-directors appointed by the Secretary of Citizens' Affairs, who serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. The Co-Directors shall be in charge of supervising and coordinating research efforts.

"903. The Group shall be funded through the Department's budget.

"904. The Group shall have access to and use of all Association facilities subject to regulations promulgated by the Secretary.

"905. The Group an, agency of the Department of Citizens' Affairs, shall function solely as a research organization so that students of The University have a method of obtaining information on public student issues pending before the Legislature of Texas, its committees and agents, and the executive and judicial departments of the government of the State.

"906 The group may research any issue it deems necessary, and as are consistent with section 905, after the co-directors transmit to the Senate the issues the Group has taken up for research. Such submitted issues shall be considered approved, unless the Senate expressly disapproves by resolution, one or more submitted issue.

SECTION II: EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act shall have immediate effect after the date of its passage by the Senate and approval by the President.

SENATORS BJORNSON AND FASANO

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

DATE

*Vice President of the Students' Association
President of the Senate*

50612
9/15/87

Student Issues Group Proposal

I. Purpose

A Student Issues Group is needed on the University of Texas campus in order to promote the understanding of issues before the legislature of the state of Texas that directly affect student life here at UT. A Student Issues Group could also promote an understanding of issues before the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System.

II. Situation

Presently there is no organized effort on a non-partisan basis to collect data on pertinent issues. This lack of information precludes many students from participating fully in our political process. This has the negative effects of precluding effective student activism, allowing legislators to ignore student needs and forcing students to rely on partisan organizations to obtain information on critical issues.

III. Functions and Composition

The Student Issues Group will act and be composed as follows:

A. Leadership

The Student Issues Group shall have two co-directors in charge of supervising and coordinating research efforts. Associate Directors will be named for each specific research issue.

B. Funding

The Student Issues Group should require no funding. If, however, the Student Issues Group should require funding, then the funds shall be appropriated from the budget of the Citizens' Affairs Department of the Students' Association of the University of Texas.

C. Facilities

The Student Issues Group will have access and will be allowed to use Students' Association facilities to aid them in their research.

D. Function

The Student Issues Group shall function solely as a research organization so that the Students of the University of Texas

shall have an accessible method to obtain information on the legislature.

IV. Projected Areas of Research

The Student Issues Group will research the following issues:

A. Grading Systems

Different aspects of the grading system used by the University of Texas System and possible reforms have been issues before the Board of Regents and the Texas Legislature. As such, it is vital they be included in the Student Issue Group's research efforts.

B. Tuition

Always aⁿ issue of concern for students, but rarely understood.

C. Admission Requirements

The possibility that standards for admission to the University of Texas will change indirectly affects many students and hence should be considered.

D. Financial Aid

Financial Aid is of high priority for the Student Issues Group, obviously, because it serves as the mechanism for many students to be able to afford their higher education.

E. Regental Affairs

Relations with the Board of Regents needs to be examined so that students who wish to petition the Board to change University rules can do so easily.

F. Landlord Tenant Legislation

Over 90% of the students attending the University of Texas live off-campus. Therefore, laws that deal with the relationship between a landlord and a tenant need to be accessible for students.

G. Drinking Age

7 of 12
9/15/87

The politics of the drinking age issue unfairly stack the odds against students. In order to correct this imbalance, students must have access to data relating to the issue.

H. Other Issues

While only six issues have been delineated as projected areas of research, other issues obviously affect student lives here at the University. Before these issues may be taken up by the Student Issues Group, they must be approved by the Student Senate after submission by the Citizens' Affairs Department head.