

Passed by unanimous consent  
3/10/13

## ~~A.R. 32~~

### ~~In Support of Increasing Election Day Voting Polls at The University of Texas at Austin~~

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**WHEREAS,** Student Government serves as the official voice of students at the University of Texas at Austin; and,

**WHEREAS,** On the 2012 Election Day, Travis County had two nearby voting poll locations at the Flawn Academic Center (FAC) and the University Co-op<sup>1</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** On the 2014 Election Day, Travis County had one on-campus voting poll at the University of Texas FAC<sup>2</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** On the 2012 Election Day, approximately 6,704 people voted at either the FAC or the University Co-op<sup>3</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** On the 2014 Election Day, approximately 2,730 people voted at the FAC and zero at the University Co-op because it was not a registered polling location<sup>4</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** For the 2014 Election Day, the closest voting centers for students were “the Flawn Academic Center on campus, Austin Community College’s Rio Grande campus at 12th and Rio Grande streets and Baker Center on 38th Street<sup>5</sup>”; and,

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.co.travis.tx.us/county\\_clerk/election/20101102/eday\\_polls.pdf](http://www.co.travis.tx.us/county_clerk/election/20101102/eday_polls.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/content/images/2014.11.04\\_Early\\_Voting/2014.11.01\\_G14\\_Daily\\_Totals-Cumulative.pdf](http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/content/images/2014.11.04_Early_Voting/2014.11.01_G14_Daily_Totals-Cumulative.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/content/images/election\\_results/2012.11.06/20121106tcpct.pdf](http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/content/images/election_results/2012.11.06/20121106tcpct.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/content/images/election\\_results/2014.11.04/20141104pct1.pdf](http://www.traviscountyclerk.org/eclerk/content/images/election_results/2014.11.04/20141104pct1.pdf)

**WHEREAS,** For the 2014 Election Day, according to the Daily Texan, “the polling stations previously located at the North Lamar Senior Activity Center, the First English Lutheran Church, and the University Co-op [were] consolidated with neighboring precinct vote centers” and were not be available”<sup>6</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** These voting poll location consolidations “disproportionately affect the student population”<sup>7</sup> of UT Austin; and,

**WHEREAS,** Voter turnout in 2014 was the lowest since World War II<sup>8</sup> but students and the general populace are predicted to turnout in larger numbers<sup>9</sup> in 2016 due to a Presidential year which will, in turn, necessitate more accessible polling locations like the University Co-op; and,

**WHEREAS,** The University Co-op President and CEO George H. Mitchell even “pointed out that we [University Co-op] have the mezzanine where we have plenty of space to set up if more space is needed than what we have provided before” as additional space to accommodate voting polls<sup>10</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** Students are discouraged from voting at the FAC on Election Day when there is an excessive wait time; and,

**WHEREAS,** At the FAC voting polls on the 2014 Election Day, maximum wait times surpassed two hours<sup>11</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** Historically student voter turnout is lower than the national average in midterm elections and that can be due to a variety of factors from discouragement through lack of voting poll accessibility<sup>12</sup>; and,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** Student Government supports civic engagement through participation in elections; therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** Student Government recommends having two or more voting locations near campus on the day of elections to increase voting poll accessibility and alleviate excessive wait times; and therefore,

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2014/10/29/with-changes-to-polling-locations-comes-greater-need-for-early-voting>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2014/10/29/with-changes-to-polling-locations-comes-greater-need-for-early-voting>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2014/10/29/with-changes-to-polling-locations-comes-greater-need-for-early-voting>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2014/11/10/voter-turnout-in-2014-was-the-lowest-since-wwii/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/24/voter-turnout-always-drops-off-for-midterm-elections-but-why/>

<sup>10</sup> Swain, Hulan. "UT Student Voting and Co-Op Initiative." Message to the author. 16 Feb. 2015. E-mail.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.statesman.com/news/news/local/voters-receive-food-water-at-long-lines-at-ut-poll/nhzZx/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.com/plse-copyedit-pub-tuesday-morning-millennials-2014-midterms-what-keeps-them-voting-how-fix-1715671>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Student Government recommends that the Travis County Clerk mandates a second Election Day voting poll to supplement the Flawn Academic Center location at the University of Texas; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Student Government supports future Election Day voting polls at the University Co-op, Student Activities Center, or the Texas Federation of Womens' Clubs; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this resolution be sent to Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir, Travis County Tax-Assessor and Collector Bruce Elfant, Office of the President Bill Powers, Office of the President of the University Co-op, Office of the Dean of Students, UT Office of Governmental Relations, and Office of the Austin Branch of the League of Women Voters.