



STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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Passed by unanimous  
Consent 9/15/15

## J.R. 1

### In Support Of Creating A 30-Day Grace Period For Clearing Financial Bars

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#### IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT

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**WHEREAS,** The Office of the Registrar defines a bar as “a restriction placed on your record that prevents registration<sup>1</sup>,” and,

**WHEREAS,** These bars are classified into three separate categories: financial, nonfinancial, and advising; and,

**WHEREAS,** Financial Bars are defined as “A restriction placed on the record of a student to deny access to the registration system because of a delinquent debt to the University<sup>2</sup>,” and,

**WHEREAS,** Students have expressed concern with the lack of flexibility within the current system for initial course registration related to the repayment of university debt; and,

**WHEREAS,** Students face high costs of attendance along with living expenses that can amount to more than \$20,000 dollars per school year<sup>3</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** During the 2013 academic school year, 50% of graduating students had borrowed money in order to cover outstanding university debt and living expenses<sup>4</sup>; and,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://registrar.utexas.edu/students/registration/before/bars>

<sup>2</sup> <http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/132/terms>

<sup>3</sup> <http://finaid.utexas.edu/costs.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/university-of-texas-3658/paying>

- WHEREAS,** Financial Aid significantly affects the ability of a student to pay off university debt, yet only 15% of students reported that their financial needs were completely met in the 2013 school year<sup>4</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** The graduating class of 2013 accrued an average of \$25,300 in total indebtedness during the their time spent at The University of Texas at Austin<sup>4</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** The average student reportedly incurs about \$5,957 of student loans per year in order to cover cost of attendance<sup>5</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** Prior to Spring 2015 registration, 6,768 students had outstanding university debt that totaled \$2,429,504.00 and amounted to an average of \$359 per student<sup>6</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** These financial bars were related to debt for Tuition, Loans, Financial Aid, Academic Units, Returned Checks, Health Services, ID Center, Libraries, Housing and Food, Athletics, Parking and Transportation, Rec Sports, and the Texas Union<sup>6</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** 769 of these financial bars are tuition or fee related, including loans, amounting to \$1,338,467. The average amount due is \$1,741<sup>6</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** 129 are past-due repayments of financial aid amounting to \$166,008 and averaging \$1,287 per charge<sup>6</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** 1,835 are past-due academic departmental charges, totaling \$234,496. The average amount due is \$128<sup>6</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** 4,038 are auxiliary-related charges, including Housing & Food, Parking, athletic charges etc., that amount to \$690,553. The average amount due is \$171<sup>6</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** Students must then often work part-time jobs or apply for student loans in order to cover the cost of attendance yet their full need may not be met; and,
- WHEREAS,** Many of these students live on a tight budget and may be unable to immediately pay off expenses as they continue to work on progressively repaying their outstanding debt; and,
- WHEREAS,** Four year graduation rates for undergraduate students remain a major priority for our university in order to reach the goal of achieving 70% four year graduation rates by 2016<sup>7</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** Timely graduation rates of graduate students as appropriate for each college and degree program remain a priority for our university; and,

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<sup>5</sup> <https://colleges.niche.com/university-of-texas---austin/statistics/>

<sup>6</sup> See attached table

<sup>7</sup> <http://news.utexas.edu/2013/09/16/ut-strives-to-improve-four-year-graduation-rates>

**WHEREAS,** Flexibility with the time frame in which students may pay off their outstanding debt would allow for students to continue enrollment at the university and graduate on time; and therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** The Office of the Registrar enact a 30-day grace period after the initial registration time as listed on the student's RIS page for students to clear financial bars which would allow for students to register for classes; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** Students will receive an email reminder during the 30-day grace period in order to remind them that they have a limited time in order to pay their outstanding debt and secure their courses for the semester; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** Students will be dropped from their course if they do not clear all financial bars at the conclusion of the 30-day grace period; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this resolution be sent to Shelby Stanfield, Office of the Registrar.