



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Failed 10/23/01
REVISED VERSION

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AR 13. A resolution disassociating President Larry Faulkner's statements and opinions from those of the student body and University community in order to promote an environment conducive to free and intelligent discussion.

WHEREAS: University of Texas at Austin President Larry Faulkner has a First Amendment right to free speech and the liberty to express his own opinions in a public forum, but does not hold the right to obstruct or censure the opinion of any member of the University community.

WHEREAS: Journalism professor Robert Jensen's remarks regarding the events that occurred on September 11, 2001 which appeared in the Houston Chronicle on September 14, 2001 were made as a free citizen and not as a representative of the University of Texas at Austin.

WHEREAS: In an effort to disassociate Robert Jensen's remarks from the University, President Larry Faulkner wrote a response to the Houston Chronicle that has incited disillusionment among some students and members of the University community toward the University and its administration as shown in the Daily Texan Firing Lines, and has stifled and debilitated free discussion regarding the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, by stating that Jensen "is not only misguided, but has become a fountain of undiluted foolishness on issues of public policy."

WHEREAS: The President's responsibility as President of the University of Texas at Austin is not to obstruct or censure opinion, but to promote an environment conducive to free and intelligent discussion and one receptive to the virtues of academic freedom and opinion and freedom of speech.

WHEREAS: Because of the hierarchical structure of the University system and its administration, the President of the University of Texas's opinions are more likely to be interpreted as representative of the University student body and community.

WHEREAS: The President of the University of Texas is not qualified to invoke autocratic authority in order to state what the student body and University community think nor how either feel because he is not an official elected by the University student body or community nor did he take any measures to ensure accurate representation.



BE IT RESOLVED: That the Student Government of the University of Texas at Austin regards President Larry Faulkner's statements as unprofessional, improper, and responsible for creating a hostile environment within the University community counterproductive to promoting an atmosphere supportive of academic freedom and opinion and freedom of speech, and therefore we, as Student Government Representatives elected by the students of the University of Texas at Austin, do not condone, support, or officially recognize President Larry Faulkner's authoritarian statements as representative of the student body and University community at large, and do not support censorship or obstruction of opinion on campus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Student Government of the University of Texas at Austin advocates and supports the right to free speech and opinion on campus, promotes and encourages students and the University community to take a proactive approach in opening up discussion and debate regarding the September 11, 2001 attacks and current U.S. war in Afghanistan, and will submit a letter to the Houston Chronicle disassociating President Larry Faulkner's statements and opinions from those of the student body and University community in order to promote an environment conducive to free and intelligent discussion.

Authored by: Zafar Shah, Asra Syed, Andre Lancaster, Frances Valdez, Alex Chavez, & Ana Amezcua

Sponsored by: Representatives Amezcua, Chavez, & Carnes

Letter to the editor of *The Houston Chronicle*

In his September 19 letter to the editor, Larry Faulkner, President of the University of Texas at Austin, responded to journalism professor Robert Jensen's September 14 Outlook article "US just as guilty of committing own violent acts" by calling him "a fountain of undiluted foolishness on issues of public policy."

Using the same liberty, we, the elected Student Government Representatives of the University of Texas at Austin, would like to convey that Larry Faulkner made his remarks entirely in his capacity as a free citizen of the United States. No aspect of his remarks is supported, condoned, or officially recognized by the University student body or community. He does not speak on behalf of the student body and community and may not speak in either's name because he is not an official elected by the University student body or community. He does not know how either think nor how either feel about these or any other issues because of his failure to take measures to ensure accurate representation of their opinion.

We feel that Larry Faulkner's responsibility, as President of the University, is to create an environment conducive to free and intelligent discussion and one receptive to the virtues of academic freedom and opinion and freedom of speech. However, in regarding Jensen's opinions as misguided and foolish, President Larry Faulkner incited disillusionment toward the University and its administration among those students and members of the University community who share Jensen's views, and stifled and debilitated free discussion regarding the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Larry Faulkner has failed to fulfill his responsibility as President of the University and has overstepped his boundaries by obstructing and censoring free discussion and "dissenting" opinion.

We, as elected Student Government Representatives, regard Larry Faulkner's statements as unprofessional, improper, and responsible for creating an environment within the University community counterproductive to promoting an atmosphere supportive of academic freedom and opinion and freedom of speech. We support the right to free speech and opinion on campus and oppose its censorship or obstruction. In addition, we feel it is our responsibility to promote and encourage the students and community of the University of Texas at Austin to take a proactive approach in reopening up discussion and debate regarding the September 11, 2001 attacks and current U.S. war in Afghanistan.

Signed,
