

approved
2/20/18

Executive Summary

J.R. 7: In Support of the Big XII Voting Challenge

Summary: The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas has obtained funding to create a Big XII Voting Challenge, with the purpose of using friendly competition between the institutions in the Big XII Athletic Conference to convince those schools and their student bodies to make an institutional commitment of improving voting and civic engagement at their campuses. This resolution establishes The University of Texas at Austin and its legislative student organizations as willing and enthusiastic participants in said challenge.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can Student Government take action after this Declaration?

Student Government can continue its existing commitments to voter registration and civic engagement, as well as communicate with the legislative student organizations at the other Big XII Member Institutions to aid in establishing institutional support across the conference. Student Government can also assist in communicating/promoting the Big XII Challenge and its mission to the student body.

2. Where will the Challenge be run out of?

The organization and implementation of the Challenge is the sole responsibility of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. Student Government will not be expected to establish any new programs or devote significant time into making the Challenge a reality.

3. What's the financial impact of this resolution?

The Big XII Voting Challenge has obtained third-party funding and will require no allocation of resources from any legislative student organizations.

J.R. 7

In Support of The Big XII Voting Challenge

Authors: ZACHARY PRICE (*Big XII Voting Challenge Student Coordinator*), ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
JACOB SPRINGER (*City Relations Agency, Student Government*), KASSIE BARROQUILLO (*TX
Votes Program Coordinator*),

Sponsors: REPRESENTATIVE ELLEN TEUSCHER (*College of Liberal Arts*), SPEAKER MADISON HUERTA

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

WHEREAS, Just 48.3% of college students voted in the 2016 presidential election¹; and,

WHEREAS, Just 70.6% of college students were registered to vote in 2016²; and,

WHEREAS, The Southwestern United States was the region with the lowest college student turnout rate in the 2016 presidential election³; and,

WHEREAS, 56.5% of students at The University of Texas at Austin voted in the 2016 presidential election, a 14.8% improvement from the 2012 presidential election⁴; and,

WHEREAS, Just 18% of students at The University of Texas at Austin voted in 2014, the last midterm election⁵; and,

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that voting once makes people significantly more likely to vote in subsequent elections⁶; and,

WHEREAS, The mission statement of the University of Texas states:

¹ https://idhe.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/NSLVE%20Report%202012-2016_1.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ https://issuu.com/utvotes/docs/2012_and_2016_nslve_report-the_univ

⁵ https://issuu.com/utvotes/docs/nslve_report-the_university_of_texas

⁶ <https://isps.yale.edu/research/publications/isps03-004>

The mission of The University of Texas at Austin is to achieve excellence in...public service⁷; and,

WHEREAS, The Big Ten⁸ and Southern⁹ Athletic Conferences have established official conference-wide challenges to promote voter turnout and civic engagement; and,

WHEREAS, The Big XII Athletic Conference has no formal commitment to voting; and,

WHEREAS, A voting initiative focused on healthy competition and the Big XII Athletic Conference would have the potential to turn out traditionally non-voting college students; and,

WHEREAS, The Big XII Voting Challenge encourages students to vote by uniting student and faculty leaders from across the Big XII Athletic Conference in support of improved voter turnout, and establishes healthy competition around voting between the Big XII Member Institutions; and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government, Senate of College Councils, and Graduate Student Assembly support the establishment of and officially join the Big XII Voting Challenge, hosted out of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at The University of Texas at Austin; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government, Senate of College Councils, and Graduate Student Assembly continue their institutional commitment to voter registration and civic engagement among the student body with the intention of winning the Big XII Voting Challenge by having the highest voter turnout and registration rates in the Big XII Athletic Conference; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government will assist in advertising and promoting the Big XII Voting Challenge in a capacity it deems appropriate; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government encourages the other Big XII institutions' Student Governments, namely The University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, Texas Christian University, Baylor University, Texas Tech University, The University of West Virginia, Iowa State University, The University of Kansas, and Kansas State University, to join the Big XII Voting Challenge by formally signing onto said challenge, obtaining their

⁷ <https://www.utexas.edu/about/mission-and-values>

⁸ [Big.Ten.Voting.Challenge-UM](#)

⁹ <http://www.soconvotes.com/>

campus' National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data, and creating a campus plan for student civic engagement; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government coordinate with The Senate of College Councils and Graduate Student Assembly, as well as Hook the Vote Agency, TX Votes, The UT Civic Engagement Alliance, University Democrats, College Republicans, and all other relevant student organizations to promote civic engagement on campus and distribute information about the Big XII Voting Challenge; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to *The Daily Texan*; Dr. Gregory Fenves, President of The University of Texas at Austin; Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Dean of Students; Mr. Bob Bowsby, Commissioner of the Big XII Athletic Conference; The Big XII Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee; Ms. Sara Babineaux, Speaker of the House, Texas Christian University; Mr. Jonathan D. Peuchen, Speaker of the Student Senate, Kansas State University; Ms. Zoey N. Shipley, Speaker of Senate, Iowa State University; Ms. Amye Dickerson, Student Body President, Baylor University; Ms. Erica B. Stephens, Student Body President, Oklahoma State University; Mr. Blake N. Humphrey, Student Body President, West Virginia University; Ms. Mady M. Womack, Student Body President, University of Kansas; Mr. J.D. Baker, Student Body President, The University of Oklahoma; and Mr. Robbie Meyer, Student Body President, Texas Tech University.