



## J.R. 4

### In Support of Incentivizing Students in First-Year and Transfer-Year Interest Groups to Attend Voices Against Violence Theatre for Dialogue Programs

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**Sponsors:** REPRESENTATIVE MICKY WOLF (*University Wide*), AND SPEAKER SANTIAGO ROSALES (*Student Government Assembly*)

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

**WHEREAS,** Interpersonal violence, discrimination and harassment continue to negatively impact student and academic life at The University of Texas at Austin; and,

**WHEREAS,** The 2015 Association of American Universities-conducted Campus Climate Survey, which included more than 6,600 participants from UT Austin, revealed that 18.5 percent of female undergraduates, 5 percent of male undergraduates, and 22.8 percent of trans and gender-nonconforming students at The University of Texas at Austin reported being the victim of sexual assault since the time of their enrollment<sup>1</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** The 2015 Campus Climate Survey also divulged that 25.5 percent of students reported being unaware of where to turn to when reporting a sexual assault<sup>2</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** The Title IX office has expressed their dissatisfaction with the results of the most recent Campus Climate Survey, and affirmed that the low percentages found within

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.utexas.edu/2015/09/21/campus-sexual-assault-survey-details-prevalence-at-ut-austin>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

warrant fresh and far-reaching measures to diminish campus-wide interpersonal violence and harassment<sup>3</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** The Title IX office deems Haven and orientation sessions insufficient avenues to conducting this personalized dialogue; and,

**WHEREAS,** The Title IX Office, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Counseling and Mental Health Center, the First-Year Experience Office, and the Voices Against Violence Interactive Theatre Program have been coordinating to implement new resource awareness pertaining to sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault; and,

**WHEREAS,** The First-Year Interest Group program reaches upwards of 60% of every incoming class of around 8,000 first-year students - 4500 out of 7286 total students in 2014 (61.76%), 5073 out of 7746 total students in 2015 (65.49%), and 5286 out of 8626 total students in 2016 (61.28%)<sup>4</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** The Transfer-Year Interest Group program reaches upwards of 12% of 300 incoming transfer students every fall<sup>5</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** In a published survey that received responses from 398 students at the University of Texas at Austin, 88.94% of students answered “somewhat, no, or definitely not” to the question “Do you believe the University of Texas at Austin adequately informs students of the resources requisite to preventing and reporting instances of sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination?”<sup>6</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** 12.6% of students reported that they believed that Haven sufficiently addresses the issues of sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault at The University of Texas at Austin<sup>7</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** Only 16.08% of students who completed the survey believe that orientation sessions sufficiently address the issues of sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault at The University of Texas at Austin<sup>8</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** 74.36% of students who completed the survey and participated in FIGs agreed that First-Year Interest Groups are a viable avenue for disseminating information pertinent to sexual discrimination, harassment, and assault<sup>9</sup>; and,

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<sup>6</sup> Qualtrics Survey

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

- WHEREAS,** 73.61% of students who completed the survey reported they would be interested in attending a one-hour interactive Voices Against Violence seminar in their first-year interest group or other 360 connection<sup>10</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** 76.13% of students who completed the survey said such a performance should be mandatory<sup>11</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** Voices Against Violence, a violence prevention and response program, hosts two interactive theatre performances designed to promote awareness of relationship violence “Get Sexy. Get Consent.” and “I like, LIKE you... Exploring Relationships”<sup>12</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** 75% of students who attended “Get Sexy. Get Consent.” reported they would act differently in future sexual situations<sup>13</sup>,85% found “I like, LIKE you... Exploring Relationships,” valuable and 70% planned to behave differently in their relationships after attending<sup>14</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** The Title IX Office, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the First-Year Experience Program, the Transfer-Year Experience Program, and the Voices Against Violence Theatre for Dialogue programs have all expressed their desire to gauge student support for incentivizing participation in monthly Interactive Theatre programs in 360 Connections; and,
- WHEREAS,** Doctor LaToya Hill Smith, Associate Vice President and Title IX Coordinator, vocalized the immediate necessity for heightening student engagement with the violence prevention community, and expressed her and her office’s enthusiastic approbation of a joint program and the between the Title IX, First-Year Experiences, and Voices Against Violence programs<sup>15</sup>; and,
- WHEREAS,** Lisa Valdez, Senior Administrative Program Coordinator in the First-Year Experience Program, emphasized that their office was pursuing viable avenues to promote resource awareness in FIG programs, and endorsed incentivizing participation in Voices Against Violence Interactive Theatre programs<sup>16</sup>; and,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> [https://cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav\\_theatrefordialogue.html](https://cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav_theatrefordialogue.html)

<sup>13</sup> [https://cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav\\_getsexygetconsent.html](https://cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav_getsexygetconsent.html)

<sup>14</sup> [https://cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav\\_likeyou.html](https://cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav_likeyou.html)

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**WHEREAS,** Doctor Jeff Mayo, Senior Program Coordinator in the Transfer-Year Experience Program, voiced his and his office's enthusiasm in "informing and empowering students" through Theatre for Dialogue programs<sup>17</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** Amissa Miller, Voices Against Violence Interactive Theater Specialist, voiced her and her office's enthusiastic support for utilizing available resources to disseminate information and foster participation in the violence prevention community<sup>18</sup>; and,

**WHEREAS,** The Office of the Chancellor "wholeheartedly supports" this initiative as it will "assist in the effort...to make students aware of the importance of reporting Title IX offenses and in helping students to understand programs and services available to them" and has referred this initiative to their Title IX Task Force to discuss implementation<sup>19</sup>; and therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils and Student Government, along with the support of their respective assemblies, recommend that the Title IX, First-Year and Transfer-Year Experience offices coordinate with the Voices Against Violence Theatre for Dialogue program to foster awareness of bystander intervention, violence prevention, and resources by incentivizing participation of individuals in First-Year Interest Groups and subsequently conducting discussion groups evaluating the information presented in the performances; and therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** That this seminar may be provided through video, classroom performances, and public performances; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this joint effort set a precedent for incentivizing all incoming students in personalized first-year communities to participate in interactive programs that facilitate dialogue pertinent to sexual assault, discrimination, and harassment; and therefore,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this resolution be sent to Mr. Gregory Fenves, President of The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Dr. LaToya Hill Smith, Associate Vice President and Title IX Coordinator, Lisa Valdez, Senior Administrative Program Coordinator in the First-Year Experience Office, Amissa Miller, Voices Against Violence Interactive Theater Specialist, and Dr. Wanda Mercer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

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<sup>19</sup> Email: w Mercer@utsystem.edu and chancellor@utsystem.edu

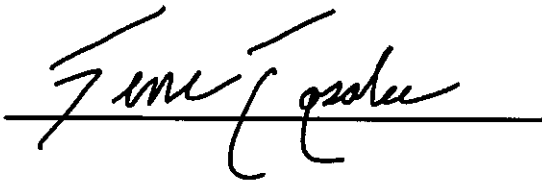
Presented to the Assembly for *First Reading* on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Committed to Student Affairs Committee

Presented to the Assembly for *Second Reading* on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

*Approved by voice vote* Date: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Proof of Approval by the 110<sup>th</sup> Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Cooper", written over a horizontal line.

*Speaker of the Assembly*

Hannah McMorris

*Clerk of the Assembly*

President's Approval

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Kevin Helgren, *Student Body President*