



STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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Passed by
Unanimous
Consent

2/23/16

A.R. 17

In Support of On-campus Space for Student Entrepreneurs

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT

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

WHEREAS, A co-working space is a mostly open-floor plan office where different startups share working space; and,

WHEREAS, Co-working spaces offer “collaborative networks, built-in resources, and a dynamic ecosystem¹” where entrepreneurs from different backgrounds and skillsets can meet and exchange knowledge; and,

WHEREAS, According to Martin Ruef, a Princeton sociologist that studies entrepreneurs, “those who broadened their universe of contacts from small groups of familiar acquaintances to larger, more loosely-connected networks of people were far more innovative¹,” and,

¹ <https://hbr.org/2012/09/the-rise-of-co-working-office>

- WHEREAS,** Entrepreneurs need to connect with other entrepreneurs, since “working within a system that’s short on people, organizations, infrastructure, and culture, can make entrepreneurship a very isolating experience²,” and,
- WHEREAS,** Current student entrepreneurs work in the PCL, Starbucks, the Union, coffee shops, and dorm rooms and apartments, none of which allow them to collaborate with each other or concentrate on their projects; and,
- WHEREAS,** Many student entrepreneurs face the question of staying in school or dropping out to start a company; and,
- WHEREAS,** Providing additional resources such as co-working space would place the university in the position of collaborator in helping students in their startup ventures, which would lower drop-out rates; and,
- WHEREAS,** The university’s previous experience with co-working space, Longhorn Startup Camp, operated for two years from 2011-2013, and housed companies in the fields of computer vision, big data, mobile, food, clothing, and more; and,
- WHEREAS,** In its two-year lifespan, Longhorn Startup Camp housed, and was integral to the success of, startups such as Favor, Texas Custom Apparel, Hoot.me, Lynx Laboratories, and many more; and,
- WHEREAS,** In 2012, “about one-third of the 1,250 business incubators in the United States [were] at universities³,” and,
- WHEREAS,** Examples of schools that have co-working spaces include Texas A&M, UC Berkeley, Duke, MIT, Syracuse, NYU, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, and Dartmouth; and therefore,
- WHEREAS,** The university’s lack of co-working space places it at a disadvantage, both in attracting entrepreneurial high school students and developing current UT student entrepreneurs; and therefore,

² <http://www.babson.edu/executive-education/education-educators/babson-insight/Articles/Pages/The-Importance-of-Place-in-Entrepreneurship.aspx>

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/education/edlife/campus-incubators-are-on-the-rise-as-colleges-encourage-student-start-ups.html?_r=0

WHEREAS, It is a surprise to many people when they discover that UT Austin, a tier-1 research university at the heart of the “silicon hills,” does not have co-working space for its students; and therefore,

WHEREAS, “Cross-pollination” is a term often used in entrepreneurship, referring to how entrepreneurs exchange knowledge and critique each other’s ideas, to everyone’s advantage; and therefore,

WHEREAS, At a university level, space would provide both a working area, where students entrepreneurs can go and focus on their companies, and a resource, in their fellow entrepreneurs at UT; and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, Student Government recognizes the value of a co-working space available to student entrepreneurs, and support the creation of such a space; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be sent to the Office of the President, the Office of Executive Vice President and Provost, the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Dean of Students, the Office of Admissions, University Unions, and *The Daily Texan*.

APPENDIX

Potential plan for co-working space:

- 3-5K sq. feet of space
- 30% offices, 60% collaborative work environment, 10% conference rooms
- Rolling chairs and tables for co-working and events
- Coffee machine
- Internet
- Key-card access capabilities
- printer

