



College Student Commission

Recommendation 20211203-3c-1: In Support of the University of Texas Student Government's Joint Resolutions 21-09 and 21-10

Authored By: Commissioner Edwin Bautista (UT)

WHEREAS, on October 19th, 2021, the Student Government General Assembly at the University of Texas at Austin unanimously passed two resolutions to address the student housing affordability crisis by proposing significant expansion of affordable on-campus housing capacity at UT Austin; and,

WHEREAS, two days later, the UT Austin Senate of College Councils unanimously passed the same resolutions; and,

WHEREAS, JR 21-09 authorizes a petition for the expansion of affordable, on-campus housing options by encouraging the University to build new dorms at several sites identified in the 2015 University of Texas Student Life Master Plan; and,

WHEREAS, JR 21-10 addresses the need to align housing cost structures to prioritize affordability, rather than incentivizing profit, in support of the institution's mission to "make UT more affordable to Texans"¹; and,

WHEREAS, on-campus housing options for students have a demonstrable impact on both engagement and academic performance, compared to their peers who live off-campus²; and,

WHEREAS, 50% of students who live off-campus, in places like Pleasant Valley, are considered to be "rent-burdened," spending more than 30% of their income on rental payments, hindering them from fully engaging in academic pursuits or campus life³; and,

¹ From Texas Advance Commitment page, <https://texasadvance.utexas.edu/>

² Smith, E. L. (2021). Forward! On-Campus Housing Capacity Expansion as an Anticipatory Model for a post-Students for Fair Admissions Equity Commitment at The University of Texas (thesis).

³ Duff, Tori. "UT Student Living Becomes Less Affordable as Austin Housing Market Grows." *The Daily Texan*, 5 Sept. 2021, <https://thedailytexan.com/2021/09/05/ut-student-living-becomes-less-affordable-as-austin-housing-market-grows/>.

WHEREAS, rapidly increasing education and housing costs disproportionately impact marginalized students⁴; and,

WHEREAS, the extreme price pressures on Austin as a whole are a serious threat to the overall future of higher education in Austin if higher education institutions are not able to attract, retain, and engage students due to the cost pressures; and,

WHEREAS, an increase in the supply of affordable student housing, along with specifically earmarked student-oriented housing near other university campuses, has the power to influence the broader, supply-restricted housing market in Austin; and,

WHEREAS, long-term, additional on-campus housing capacity is the most sustainable solution for current and future students.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the College Student Commission officially supports JR-09 and JR-10 of the UT Student Government; and,

RESOLVED, that the College Student Commission urges the Austin City Council to sign in support of UT Student Government's forthcoming petition to expand the supply of affordable on-campus housing for their student population; and,

RESOLVED, that the City Council direct the Housing and Community Development Office in the Housing and Planning Department take an active role in collaborating with each institution under the purview of the College Student Commission (Austin Community College District, Concordia University, Huston-Tillotson University, St. Edward's University, and the University of Texas at Austin) and the communities they serve, in identifying viable sites for the development of affordable student housing; and,

RESOLVED, that to such an end the City Council appoint a liaison within the Development Services Department who works in collaboration with the College Student Commission to facilitate the development of a stronger relationships between colleges and the city, with the intent to identify needs, barriers, and solutions for expanding affordable student housing options; and,

RESOLVED, that these actions would have positive ramifications on the greater student housing market; and,

RESOLVED, that affordable housing earmarked for students provides exponentially greater equity and efficiency because the same unit can be used by several generations of students over the lifetime of the building; and,

RESOLVED, that this constitutes an important investment a municipality may make in ensuring for the quality education of its youth.

⁴ Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. (2018, April). Still hungry and homeless in college. Wisconsin Hope Lab, Retrieved from <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless.pdf> (PDF, 1.33MB)

Date of Approval: 3 December 2021

Record of the vote: Passed unanimously, 10-0-0. Motion to pass by Chair Jeffrey Clemmons (H-T), seconded by Commissioner Todd Clayton (H-T). Voting in favor of the recommendation: Co-Chair Lira Ramirez (UT), Secretary Tatum Owens (UT) Commissioners Edwin Bautista (UT), Todd Clayton (H-T), Pete Cervantes (SEU), Esther Heymans (SEU), Justin Parker (ACC), Isaiah Smith (ACC), and Ethan Tobias (SEU). Chair voted in the affirmative.

Attest: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Clemmons', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeffrey Clemmons

Chair, College Student Commission