

The Graduate Student Assembly  
The University of Texas at Austin

Resolution: G.R. 14 (S) 3

Introduced By: Adam J Tallman

David Villarreal

Action Taken: Passed

Certified: Columbia Mishra

Columbia Mishra

President, GSA

G.R. 14 (S) 3: In Support of Further Study before Implementation of the Shared Services Pilot Program

*Summary: A resolution requesting that the Shared Services Steering Committee provide the Graduate Student Assembly with additional information regarding the implementation of Shared Services on the campus of The University of Texas at Austin.*

**Whereas (1):** The Graduate Student Association (GSA), a Legislative Student Organization recognized by the Office of the Dean of Students, is the elected governing body of the 13,000 graduate and professional students at the University of Texas at Austin; and,

**Whereas (2):** The Graduate Student Assembly has received and supports the resolution passed by the Faculty Council of the University of Texas at Austin on January 27, 2014 to request additional transparency throughout the implementation of Shared Services;

26 and,

27 **Whereas (3):** Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the University of Texas at Austin Mr.  
28 Kevin Hegarty attended the Graduate Student Assembly meeting on Wednesday,  
29 Oct. 30, 2014 where he made known his desire to create an open campus dialogue  
30 with the graduate student community regarding the implementation of Shared  
31 Services; and,

32 **Whereas (4):** Plans for piloting of Shared Services in certain units on the campus of the University  
33 of Texas at Austin are being readied, and the Shared Services Steering Committee  
34 desires to receive accurate feedback concerning the implementation of Shared  
35 Services within these units; and,

36 **Whereas (5):** While we appreciate Mr. Hegarty taking the time to meet with student leaders,  
37 including the GSA, we are nonetheless very concerned about the criticisms made of  
38 the Shared Services models adopted or planned for adoption at other universities,  
39 including but not limited to the University of California Berkeley, the University of  
40 Michigan at Ann Arbor, Yale University, and others.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the University of  
41 Michigan's open letter that has received over 1,100 faculty signatories stated that  
42 such a reorganization will reduce faculty productivity and forfeit research funding  
43 and that "the process had been shrouded in secrecy and the details kept murky";<sup>2</sup>  
44 and,

45 **Whereas (6):** We have full confidence in the University's desire to maintain transparency and  
46 solicit feedback through every step of the Shared Service process and want to  
47 provide them with an effective means of communicating with graduate students  
48 about the impacts made from the implementation of Shared Services; and,

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<sup>1</sup> Ry Rivard, "Shared Services Blacklash," *Inside Higher Ed*, Nov. 21, 2013; Don Troop, "Shared Services Plan Rile Faculty Members at 2 Flagships," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Dec. 10, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> <http://um-openletter.eecs.umich.edu/>

49 **Whereas (7):** Member of the Graduate Student Assembly and GSA Executive Committee have  
50 heard from faculty, staff, graduate student employees, and other members of the  
51 graduate student community who are concerned that the Shared Services model is  
52 not yet proven to work within universities and that there are no credible data to  
53 support the promises of greater efficiencies, quality of service, and job satisfaction;  
54 and,

55 **Whereas (8):** We hold serious reservations about the past profit projections that have been  
56 originally reported and see that they have been overestimated on the order of sixty to  
57 eighty million dollars by underreporting upfront costs;<sup>3</sup> and,

58 **Whereas (9):** We appreciate the numerous Shared Services town hall meetings and other meetings  
59 with large and small groups on campus this fall, and we remain hopeful that the  
60 information gathered will be incorporated into new plans that are kinder to the  
61 academic culture, and have recommendations for further efforts to include student  
62 feedback during implementation; and,

63 **Whereas (10):** Departmental administrative staff are integral to the study and work experience of  
64 graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin, which means graduate will be  
65 directly impacted by the implementation of Shared Services.

66 **Therefore**

67 **Let it be**

68 **Resolved (1):** The Graduate Student Assembly specifically asks that Kevin Hegarty publish on the  
69 Shared Services website and in other appropriate venues the following:

70 1. Regular reports, published on no less than a quarterly basis, on the process of

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Alberto Martinez, “The problem with Hegarty’s plan to save UT? It costs too much,” *Daily Texan*, Nov. 14, 2013 (see commentary for additional explanation); Dr. Alberto Martinez, “Should We Centralize Staff at UT?” Special Presentation, Graduate Student Assembly, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, Dec. 13, 2013.

71 implementation in these units.

72 2. A report on the preliminary and final results of implementation of some form of  
73 shared services in the College of Liberal Arts and wherever else such programs  
74 exist already. We assume that those programs that prove to be successful will be  
75 retained.

76 3. The plan for data collection for the pilots. We suggest these data should include  
77 satisfaction levels of all participants in the program, as well as efficiency and  
78 cost-saving information and accurate profit projections. These must take into  
79 account costs associated with consulting and implementation. These costs must  
80 be itemized and not estimated into a lump sum as in the original Shared Services  
81 Report. Members of the Graduate Student Assembly would be happy to help  
82 draft the surveys and other data-collection tools.

83 4. A plan for dissemination of the data and lessons learned from the pilots to  
84 faculty, staff, and graduate student employees of the University.

85 **Be it**

86 **Further**

87 **Resolved (2):** We also ask for the following:

88 5. A start to dissemination of aforementioned materials and information from Mr.  
89 Hegarty's office to the Faculty Council and the President of the Graduate Student  
90 Assembly by the next Graduate Student Assembly meeting (March 5, 2014).

91 6. Information about the status, role, and compensation for any consulting firm  
92 associated with the implementation of Shared Services.

93 7. Meeting minutes for all meetings held by the Shared Services project team.

94 **Be it**

95 **Further**

96 **Resolved (3):** And, we respectfully request that at least one graduate student employee be added to  
97 the Shared Services Steering Committee appointed by the president of the GSA.

98 **Be it**

99 **Further**

100 **Resolved (4):** That official copies of this resolution be delivered to Mr. Kevin Hegarty, Vice  
101 President and Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Judith H. Langlois, the Dean of the  
102 Graduate School; Dr. Michael White, Chair of the Graduate Assembly; Dr. Charles  
103 Roeckle, Deputy to the President; Dr. Gregory Fenves, Executive Vice President and  
104 Provost; Dr. Hillary Hart, Chair of the Faculty Council; and the Deans of All  
105 Colleges; the *Daily Texan* and other Texas Student Media outlets.