This Resolution Shall Henceforth be Known as the:

“Recommendation to Identify Funding Sources for Sustainable Projects”

PURPOSE

To recommend an institutionalized funding source for sustainable projects at The University of Texas at San Antonio

OPENING STATEMENT

Sustainability has been expressed by this administration and those before as being important and necessary to becoming a Tier One institution. The University of Texas at San Antonio has greatly benefited from the Green Fund (which has been discontinued), through the funding of projects and initiatives aimed at reducing and or mitigating our campus’ impact on the environment by becoming more sustainable.

WHEREAS: Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution of The University of Texas at San Antonio’s Student Government Association (UTSA SGA) reads: “The duties and responsibilities of the SGA General Assembly shall be: To review, discuss, consider, and take any necessary action through legislation on all issues which concern the campus or students”; and

WHEREAS: The 81st Texas Legislature in 2009 passed House Bill 3353, relating to an environmental service fee at public institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS: In 2010, UTSA students voted in favor of a student referendum to introduce a green fee, alongside half a dozen other Texas higher education institutions; and

WHEREAS: The Green Fund Committee, which successfully fulfilled its mission to assist the University’s efforts in sustainability, and has since been inactive since 2015 following the dissolution of the Green Fund collection1; and

1 http://www.paisano-online.com/news-articles/enough-green-go-green/
WHEREAS: The University of Texas at San Antonio Student Government Association has had an extended history with student leaders in environmental services committees, including but not limited to: The Green Fund Committee, The Go Green Committee and the Student Sustainability Committee; and

WHEREAS: All three of the last Student Body Presidents at the University of Texas at San Antonio, following the end of the green fee’s sunset clause, has either authored or signed a resolution in favor of returning the Green Fund 2&3; and

WHEREAS: There is an established precedent of collecting funds for sustainable projects as part of tuition, as seen at UT-Austin4; and

WHEREAS: The Student Sustainability Committee, a subcommittee of the Student Government Association, made note that, “During its run, the Green Fund fulfilled a vital role in allowing any student to become a community leader and make a direct impact on the university and the surrounding area with the backing of the combined support of the university staff, fellow environmentally-conscious students, and the Student Government Association at UTSA. The retirement of the Green Fund and the Green Fee stifles a once great opening for students to develop successful project management skills, create their own research opportunities, network with other community leaders and experienced professionals, demonstrate unique innovations, and finally, fulfill a global perspective by ‘thinking globally and acting locally’”5; and

WHEREAS: The University of Texas at San Antonio is an institute that prides itself on fostering innovation and discovery to promote itself as a premier State research institution; and

WHEREAS: Chapter 9.43 of the Handbook of Operating Procedures of the University of Texas at San Antonio states “The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) is committed to the development of programs, initiatives, and practices that promote sustainability practices and that contribute meaningfully to the environment”6; and

WHEREAS: Of the twelve Texas institutes with a publicly available sustainability assessment rating published by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), UTSA’s rating at the time of writing is the lowest in the entire state.7

4 https://president.utexas.edu/messages/tuition-proposal
5 goo.gl/hxCuYL
6 http://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter9/9-43.html
7 https://goo.gl/uJFuLF
WHEREAS: University-wide sustainable innovations such as the hydration stations, Big Belly solar compactors, Sombrilla fountain renovation, solar panel installations and the campus garden were made possible through the Green Fund grant program; and

WHEREAS: The establishment of an institutional Green Fund will showcase the University's commitment to the visions and mission of UTSA and, furthermore, commitment to hearing the voice and direction of the student body

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Student Government Association of the University of Texas at San Antonio highly encourage University Administration to identify all possible funding sources for sustainable initiatives and projects to either meet or exceed the current average of other UT system schools and other peer institutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The Student Government Association of the University of Texas at San Antonio is in favor of the Green Fund proposal that has been presented to the Tuition and Fees Committee, and recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the Office of Sustainability and additionally recommend that the University explores all options in maintaining and possibly expanding said office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: This resolution will to be sent to: University President Taylor Eighmy, VPBA Kathryn Funk-Baxter, VPSA Sam Gonzales, VPAA Mauli Agrawal, UT System Board of Regents Chairperson Sara Tucker, and UT System Chancellor William McRaven, with this clause omitted from the resolution.

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Marcus Thomas
President of Student Government Association
The University of Texas at San Antonio