WHEREAS, in order for the State of Texas to stay nationally competitive in its pursuit of a future dominated by renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, the University of North Texas has been a recognized leader in environmental research for more than 77 years and has an academic tradition of green and energy-efficient programs to conserve water and energy; and

WHEREAS, The University of North Texas was the first large public institution in Texas to sign the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment; and

WHEREAS, air pollution in the region consistently exceeds national air quality standards set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency; and

WHEREAS, emissions from the municipally owned quick-start natural gas generator will negatively impact the air quality of university students; and

WHEREAS, the currently established We Mean Green student environmental service fee, as outlined by Texas House Bill 3353, would be fully depleted by an annual university-wide purchase of renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, there is no ratified Texas Legislature Bill that allows universities to charge their students a fee to purchase renewable energy credits or carbon offsets;

LET IT BE RESOLVED, a referendum be scheduled for the Fall 2016 Election to assess the Student Body’s interest in a Carbon Neutrality Fee.

“Do you authorize the University of North Texas to charge the Student Body a fee not to exceed $1/hour each semester for the purpose of fully neutralizing the University’s carbon footprint through the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits and/or verified carbon offsets?”
Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Miller  
Senator, College of Engineering
Tiffany Miller  
Senator, College of Arts & Sciences
Cam Johnson  
Senator, College of Arts & Sciences
Mercedes Mercado  
Senator, College of Education
Teresa Aguayo  
Senator, College of Business
Laura Sanders  
Senator, Colleges of Public Administration & Community Service
Rishi Talati  
Senator, Texas Academy of Math & Science
Nilanjana Nair  
University of North Texas Student Government Freshman Intern

In Witness thereof, I hereby certify the Student Senate of the University of North Texas Student Government Association has approved this document and is referred to the office of the President.

Speaker of the Senate

Presidential Action:

☑  Approved

President of the Student Government Association

Vice President of Student Affairs

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Date
February 24, 2017

Dear Barrett:

Thank you for your patience as I reviewed and signed SGA’s fall legislation. You will notice there are a couple of pieces of legislation I have not signed. The reasons for this are outlined below:

F2016-B2 – Transportation Fee Increase Referendum

As we have discussed, this increase was not supported by the Vice President for Financial and Administration in large part because it was not needed. The Transportation office has undergone quite a bit of change in the last year and before we pursue a fee increase, we owe it to our students to adjust to these changes and better understanding what is truly needed.

F2016-B3 – Carbon Neutrality Fee Referendum

Similar to above, the implementation of this fee was not needed at this time. We were able to accomplish the goal of the legislation for much less than what was requested with existing funds. The partnership with the We Mean Green Fund helped us accomplish this, along with support from the university. Additionally, given the legislative climate it would have not been in the best interest of the university to pursue a new fee.

I would be remiss if I did not also ask that when SGA pursues the implementation of a new fee (or even an increase), senators include the administration in your planning and discussions. When we are involved in the process, in some instances we can meet the needs and desires of students without transferring the financial burden to students.

Although I signed F2016-R1 – Pets on Campus Resolution, I want to note that my signature is acknowledgment that I will ask Housing to consider this option. Ultimately, it will be up to them to weigh the positive and negative impacts of more pets on campus.

As for the other pieces of legislation, I will be sure to speak with the appropriate staff to ensure they understand the needs of SGA and encourage further research on the feasibility of suggestions. Thank you for the work SGA put towards the undergraduate student body last fall. I look forward to what you accomplish this spring.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth With, Ed.D.