WHEREAS, There exists an arbitrary moral-political distinction between legal and illicit psychoactive substances, even though the former are often as dangerous or more so than the latter.

WHEREAS, Students who use or are found with illicit psychoactive substances both on and off-campus can be arrested or incarcerated.

WHEREAS, The UNT Administration has the capability of imposing penalties such as loss of on-campus residency, expulsion from dining halls, and a large fine for first-time substance possession offenses.

WHEREAS, The following statistics show how drug policies that support, rather than punish, people who use psychoactive substances are more effective in reducing the risk of harms associated with problematic substance use (In this context, support refers to offering comprehensive and evidence-based harm reduction information and services for people who use psychoactive substances):

- In 2001, Portugal decriminalized the use of all drugs and simultaneously adopted policies that provided “…access to evidence-based, voluntary treatment programs; adopting harm reduction practices; and investing in the social reintegration of people with drug dependence.”
- This approach decreased overdose deaths by over 80%. Prevalence rate of people who use drugs that account for new HIV/AIDS diagnoses fell from 52% to 6%. Incarceration for drug offenses decreased by over 40%.
- “Portugal’s decriminalization model has not led to increases in overall drug use, while it has decisively lowered problematic drug use and improved health outcomes.”
- Various forms of drug decriminalization have been implemented in 34 countries so far.
- “Needle exchange programs: In communities where they operate, the rates of HIV and other blood-borne diseases are much lower than in communities where sterile syringes are unavailable, according to thousands of studies.”
- “Naloxone: The overdose reversal medication saves lives—10,000 between 1996 and 2010, according to the Centers for Disease Control.”
• “Supervised injection facilities (SIFs): Hygienic facilities staffed by medical and support staff reduce disease transmission, prevent overdose, and provide access to drug treatment and other health care.”

• “Recidivism rates for young adults released from prison are significantly higher than for other age groups. One study found that approximately 76 percent of people who were under the age of 25 when released from prison were rearrested within three years, and 84 percent were rearrested within five years.”

• “Brooklyn’s DTAP program, where drug or drug addicted defendants plead guilt to an offense, and then enter a 15 to 24 month residential, therapeutic community treatment system as an alternative to a prison sentence, also saw solid program graduation rates and lower arrest rates. More than half of DTAP participants completed the program, and they stayed in treatment six times longer (a medium of 17.8 month versus 3 months) than those in nationally comparable long-term residential drug treatment.”

• “DTAP participants have arrest rates that were 26 percent lower two years after leaving the program than those of a matched comparison group two years after leaving prison. DTAP participants are 67% less likely to return to prison than the comparison group leaving prison.”

• “According to the federal NTIES report, offenders who went through treatment showed a nearly two-thirds decline in overall arrests and an over 50% drop in drug possession arrests.”

WHEREAS, The listed statistics indicate that contemporary drug policies in the United States are not based on leading scientific research, but instead are centered on the stigmatizing misconception that punitive responses are an effective way of controlling the use of illicit psychoactive substances.

WHEREAS, Students who use drugs for the first time on campus deserve a second chance at their degree and career.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, The UNT SGA recommends that the UNT Administration adopt fair disciplinary policies by not imposing penalties such as loss of on-campus residency, loss of dining hall usage, suspension, and/or expulsion on students for first-time drug possession offenses.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, The UNT Administration adopt policies that affirm that the type of psychoactive substance, including marijuana and alcohol, will no longer be a qualifying role in determining sanctions for student misconduct, however, all other variables involved in drug policy violations shall still be considered.
LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, The UNT SGA recommends that all students referred to UNT with a first-time drug possession offense be referred to educational and/or rehabilitation services, and that UNT work diligently to inform students that illegal substance use is still subject to penalties within the criminal justice system.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, This Resolution be sent to the following departments:

1. Dean of Students
2. Substance Use Resource and Education Center (SURE)
3. Housing and Residence Life
4. Graduate Student Council
5. Faculty Senate

Respectfully Submitted,

Senator Devon Skinner
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Tristan Seikel
UNT Student and President of Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Shane Warren
UNT Student and President of College Democrats

Tyler Miller-Shain
UNT Student and President of College Republicans

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.

[Signature]

Speaker of the Senate

Presidential Action:

☑ Approved

[Signature]

President of the Student Government Association

[Signature]

Vice President of Student Affairs

11/19/19

Date

11/19/19

Date

12/4/19

Date