A RESOLUTION ON A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR STUDENT SAFETY IN RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATIONS AND ACTIONS THAT VIOLATE UNIVERSITY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

WHEREAS the tense political and social climate of the United States has arisen over the past few years and, coupled with the historical background of our country, has caused students across the country to feel increasingly challenged by issues of inclusion, safety, and wellbeing, it is imperative that SMU Student Senate take an active stand against communications and actions that violate the anti-discriminatory policies of the university, and

RECOGNIZING that this legislation was written with the help of several members of the SMU community, and that the basis of this legislation is incentivized by students concerned about their safety on campus after several incidents that have occurred at SMU that targeted different communities, and

RECOGNIZING that much of this legislation was crafted in collaboration with a variety of leaders on campus to serve as a declaration of improving quality of student life for all SMU students, and

ACKNOWLEDGING that free speech is a hallmark of the university and that legislation passed by Student Senate, S-104-01, affirms the student body’s support of maintaining free speech,. and that no student speech, whether through a group or as an individual, shall be infringed upon, and further

ACKNOWLEDGING that as a private university, SMU retains the power and authority to enforce its anti-discrimination policy if student speech violates this policy,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that Student Senate pass a “Bill of Rights” to affirm the student body’s commitment to members of the SMU community of varying races/ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, religious beliefs, and/or socioeconomic statuses.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following rights shall be recognized:

1. All students, faculty, and staff members have the right to safety and wellbeing at SMU regardless of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religious beliefs and/or socioeconomic status. No student, faculty, or staff member should feel threatened because of their background while attending SMU, as every Mustang shall be valued.

2. Students have inherent human rights not limited to but exemplified by the basic human dignity in expressing one’s diverse opinions and thoughts. The expression of said identities without discrimination or threat by other students and campus officials must be protected.

3. Students, faculty, and staff members should have access to a police force that is active, thoughtful and aware. Increased transparency through student inclusion on security/police-driven committees will drive intelligent and appropriate protective measures.

4. Statements made to the entire student body in favor of hateful, violent, or discriminatory actions by any group or individual, whether they are affiliated with the university or not, should be explicitly condemned as violations of the university’s anti-discrimination policy as discriminatory. Campus officials and members of the SMU Student Senate should discuss actions that violate university anti-discrimination policy on a large scale so that students, faculty, and staff are made aware of dangers present on campus and help members of the community that are threatened by such actions.

5. Campus officials must strive to ensure that all members of the university community may conduct everyday tasks and obligations without discrimination/harm by communications and actions that target and/or harm their racial/ethnic identity, sexual orientation, gender, religious identity, and/or socioeconomic status.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Gonzalez
Pre-Major Senator

Audrey Ngo
Diversity Chair